THE RACE TO THE TOP – EARLY LEARNING CHALLENGE
YEAR TWO PROGRESS REPORT

December 2014

THE RACE TO THE TOP – EARLY LEARNING CHALLENGE YEAR TWO PROGRESS REPORT

AN OVERVIEW OF IMPLEMENTATION FROM THE FOURTEEN RTT–ELC STATES' ANNUAL PERFORMANCE REPORTS FOR 2013

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In States that make it a priority to educate our youngest children . . . studies show students grow up more likely to read and do math at grade level, graduate high school, hold a job, form more stable families of their own. We know this works. So let's do what works and make sure none of our children start the race of life already behind.

—President Barack Obama, State of the Union, February 12, 2013

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The human brain develops rapidly in the first five years of life. High-quality early learning experiences can have a profound and lasting positive effect on young children during these years, setting the stage for success in kindergarten and beyond.[1] This is especially true for young children with high needs who are from low-income families;[2] who have disabilities or developmental delays; who are English learners; who reside on "Indian lands"; who are migrant, homeless, or in foster care; and other children as identified by the State.

The Race to the Top – Early Learning Challenge (RTT-ELC) program, authorized by Congress in 2011,[3] is designed to improve the quality of early learning and development programs for young children. The RTT-ELC grants support States' efforts to design and implement an integrated system of high-quality early learning programs and services.

Twenty States were awarded four-year grants in three phases. Nine Phase 1 States (**California, Delaware, Maryland, Massachusetts, Minnesota, North Carolina, Ohio, Rhode Island,** and **Washington**) received funding in 2012. Five Phase 2 States (**Colorado, Illinois, New Mexico, Oregon,** and **Wisconsin**) received funding in 2013 and supplementary funding in 2014. In Phase 3, an additional six States (**Georgia, Kentucky, Michigan, New Jersey, Pennsylvania,** and **Vermont**) received funding in 2014. The Federal investment in these 20 RTT-ELC grants is just over $1 billion.[4] This discretionary grant program is administered jointly by the U.S. Departments of Education (ED) and Health and Human Services (HHS).

As they work to implement their RTT-ELC projects, each State brings an individual early learning history, climate, and structure to the work, as well as unique challenges that must be addressed. While the RTT-ELC framework provides a general structure for key reform levers to improve quality and access for children with high needs, States were given flexibility to choose which components they were ready to address and how they would reach the goals within their plans.

The RTT-ELC Framework for Reform

The RTT-ELC framework consists of five key areas that represent the foundation of an effective early learning and development reform agenda. All RTT-ELC grantees were required to address two Core Areas of the RTT-ELC framework: A*) A Successful State System* and *B) High-Quality, Accountable Programs.* States then identified specific components in the remaining three areas (called Focused Investment Areas) and developed plans for how they would use their RTT-ELC funds in these areas. The Focused Investment Areas are: *C) Promoting Early Learning and Development Outcomes for Children, D) A Great Early Childhood Education Workforce,* and *E) Measuring Outcomes and Progress*.[5]

State-Reported Progress

RTT-ELC States submit Annual Performance Report (APR) data to ED and HHS each year as a requirement of the grant. In the spring of 2014, Phase 1 States and Phase 2 States submitted their APRs for 2013, their second and first APRs, respectively. This summary report provides information about the progress the 14 Phase 1 and Phase 2 States reported in their APRs for 2013.

This report provides information from the 14 States about the impressive progress they are making in reforming their early learning and development systems. Here are a few of the highlights:

- A Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System (TQRIS) is a systemic approach to assessing, improving and communicating the levels of quality in early learning and development programs.[6] RTT-ELC States have increased the number of early learning and development programs participating in their TQRIS and are implementing strategies to improve the quality of those programs. The total number of programs in the 14 States' TQRIS increased from 31,321 programs to 54,157 programs enrolled in their TQRIS, a 73 percent increase from the time of their applications to the end of 2013.

- More children with high needs gained access to high-quality early learning and development experiences in RTT-ELC States. There was a 175 percent increase in the numbers of children with high needs enrolled in State-funded preschool programs in the top tiers of their TQRIS, a 43 percent increase in the numbers of children with high needs enrolled in Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF) funded programs in the top tiers of their TQRIS, and an 83 percent increase in the numbers of children with high needs enrolled in Head Start/Early Head Start programs in the top tiers of their TQRIS.

- Ten States are targeting specific high-need communities or "zones" where they are implementing a set of initiatives aimed at building local capacity to support the workforce, engage families, and serve more children with high needs.

- RTT-ELC States are working to identify what the early childhood education workforce should know and be able to teach young children. States are tying these core competencies to professional development opportunities and higher education course offerings so that early childhood educators can continue to progress in the field.

- States are gathering essential data about how ready children are when they begin kindergarten by developing or implementing Kindergarten Entry Assessments (KEAs). Some States are currently piloting their KEAs; others are focused on training their early childhood educators to conduct the assessments; and still others are in the development phase and identifying assessment tools or establishing implementation strategies.

- States are increasingly working across agencies to develop governance structures, put Memoranda of Understanding in place, and build or enhance program teams to implement their RTT-ELC plan activities.

The document describes some of the initiatives that 14 RTT-ELC States undertook in the first or second year of their grants, as reported in their Annual Performance Reports (APRs). It is not intended to be a comprehensive look at all the activities and progress States have made to date. Yet even in this short period of time and in this brief report, it is clear that the RTT-ELC grantees are making progress toward improving the quality of early learning and development programs in their States and providing access to these high-quality programs for more children with high needs. These efforts are moving States toward the RTT-ELC goal of providing more children from birth through age 5 with a strong foundation that is needed to succeed in school and beyond. The infusion of funding, coordinated technical assistance from RTT-ELC, and firm timelines are giving States the needed impetus to develop a systems-based approach to improving the education and development of their youngest citizens.

[1] For research about the lasting effects of high-quality early learning experiences, see Camilli, Gregori, Sadako Vargas, Sharon Ryan, and W. Steven Barnett. "Meta-Analysis of the Effects of Early Education Interventions on Cognitive and Social Development," *Teachers College Record*, 112 (2010): 579–620. http://rci.rutgers.edu/~camilli/Papers/38_15440.pdf. Reynolds, Arthur J., Judy A. Temple, Suh-Ruu Ou, Irma A. Arteaga, and Barry A. B. White. "School-Based Early Childhood Education and Age-28 Well-Being: Effects by Timing, Dosage, and Subgroups," *Science*, 33 (2011): 360-364. http://www.sciencemag.org/content/333/6040/360. Princiotta, Dan, and Kristin Denton Flanagan. *Fifth Grade: Findings From the Fifth-Grade Follow-up of the Early Childhood Longitudinal Study, Kindergarten Class of 1998–99 (ECLS–K). (NCES 2006–038).* U.S. Department of Education, 2006. http://nces.ed.gov/pubs2006/2006038.pdf. Halle, Tamara, Nicole Forry, Elizabeth Hair, Kate Perper, Laura Wandner, Julia Wessel, and Jessica Vick. *Disparities in Early Learning and Development: Lessons from the Early Childhood Longitudinal Study—Birth Cohort (ECLS–B).* Child Trends, 2009. http://www.childtrends.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/05/2009-52DisparitiesELExecSumm.pdf

[2] For information about the benefits of high-quality early learning opportunities for children from low-income families, see Duncan, Greg J. and Robert J. Murnane. *Restoring Opportunity: The Crisis of Inequality and the Challenge for American Education*. Boston: Harvard Education Press, 2014. Additional information including Video about Boston Public Schools PreK program and related infographics is at http://restoringopportunity.com/. Also see Forry, Nicole, Elizabeth E. Davis, and Kate Welti. "Ready or not: Associations Between Participation in Subsidized Child Care Arrangements, Pre-Kindergarten, and Head Start and Children's School Readiness." *Early Childhood Research Quarterly* 28 (2013): 634-644.

[3] See §1832(b)(1), title VIII, Division B of P.L. 112-10, the Department of Defense and Full-Year Continuing Appropriations Act, 2011. http://www.acf.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/ecd/rtt_elc_legislation.pdf.

[4] For more information about the three phases of RTT-ELC please see the RTT-ELC website at http://www2.ed.gov/programs/racetothetop-earlylearningchallenge/applicant.html, which contains links to materials related to the three phases.

[5] The RTT-ELC framework was first established in the 2011 Notice Inviting Applications for RTT-ELC, 76 FR 53564 (Aug. 26, 2011).

[6] National Center on Child Care Quality Improvement. QRIS Quality Standards Web Sites. Office of Child Care, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 2013. https://occqrisguide.icfwebservices.com/files/QRIS_Standards_Websites.pdf. Also see the definition of "Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System" from the RTT-ELC Notices Inviting Applications, which is identical across the three ELC Phases. NOTE: Information in the endnotes of the Executive Summary are also contained in the main section of the report, *The Race to the Top Early Learning Challenge: Year Two Progress Report* at https://elc.grads360.org/#program

RTT-ELC OVERVIEW

"High-quality early education can be a game-changer for the children and families who need the most support. Investing in our children during their critical early years of life is ultimately an investment in our collective future."

— U.S. Secretary of Education Arne Duncan

High-quality early learning and development opportunities provided by supportive, well-trained early childhood educators are vital for our nation's children, especially those with high needs.[i] The first five years of life are a critical period of rapid brain development. Research shows that high-quality early learning experiences can have a profound and lasting effect on children, setting the stage for success in kindergarten and beyond.[ii] This is especially true for children with high needs, which the RTT-ELC Notice Inviting Applications defines as children from birth through kindergarten entry who are from low-income families or otherwise in need of special assistance and support. This definition includes children who have disabilities or developmental delays; who are English learners; who reside on "Indian lands"; who are migrant, homeless, or in foster care; and other children as identified by the State.[iii]

The purpose of the Race to the Top – Early Learning Challenge (RTT-ELC) program, authorized by Congress in 2011,[iv] is to help States reach the goal of having all the nation's children enter kindergarten ready to succeed. RTT-ELC is a competitive grant program that is administered jointly by the U.S. Department of Education (ED) and the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS). This signature program supports States in developing comprehensive, coordinated early learning systems. These systems provide a mechanism for improving the quality of early learning and development programs and ensuring better outcomes for children and families.

RTT-ELC Grantee States

During the first year of the program, 2012, nine States received RTT-ELC grants (Phase 1). Five additional States received grants in 2013 (Phase 2). Six additional States received funding in 2014 (Phase 3). The 20 RTT-ELC grantee States and their phases are represented in figure 1. Figure 2 indicates the funding amounts that were awarded to each RTT-ELC State. The Federal investment in these 20 RTT-ELC grants is just over $1 billion.[v]
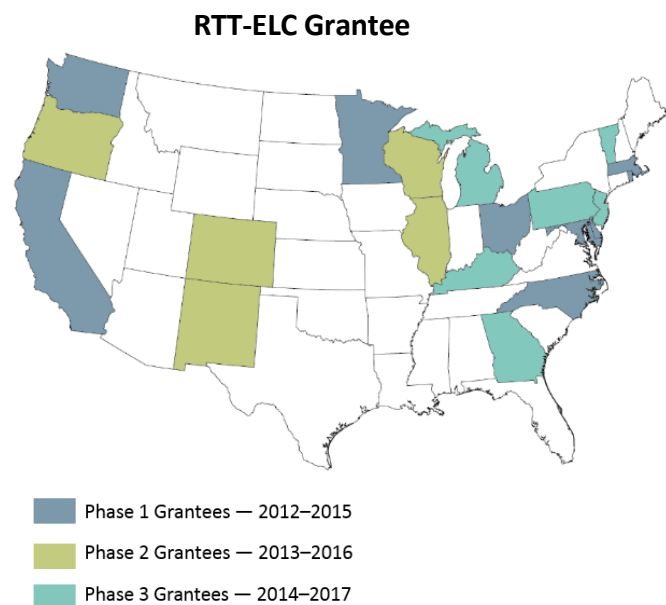
RTT-ELC Grantee

Phase 1 Grantees — 2012–2015
Phase 2 Grantees — 2013–2016
Phase 3 Grantees — 2014–2017

Figure 1. RTT-ELC Grantee States

RTT-ELC FEDERAL GRANT AMOUNTS

Phase 1 Grantees: 2012–2015
California	$75,000,000
Delaware	$49,878,774
Maryland	$49,999,143
Massachusetts	$50,000,000
Minnesota	$44,858,313
North Carolina	$69,991,121
Ohio	$69,993,362
Rhode Island	$50,000,000
Washington	$60,000,000

Phase 2 Grantees: 2013–2016
Colorado	$44,888,832
Illinois	$52,498,043
New Mexico	$37,500,000
Oregon	$30,763,353
Wisconsin	$34,052,084

Phase 3 Grantees: 2014–2017
Georgia	$51,739,254
Kentucky	$44,347,932
Michigan	$51,736,815
New Jersey	$44,286,179
Pennsylvania	$51,733,877
Vermont	$36,930,618

Total RTT-ELC Funding: $1,000,197,700

Figure 2. RTT-ELC Federal Grant Amounts

Children from Birth through Age 5 in Low-Income Families in RTT-ELC States			
Grantee	Total Number of Children Birth through Age in the State*	Total Number of Children Birth through Age in the State in Families Below 200% FPL**	Percent of Children in State in Families Below 200% of FPL
California	3,039,100	1,471,173	48.4%
Colorado	408,529	170,366	41.7%
Delaware	67,540	28,567	42.3%
Illinois	979,832	427,741	43.7%
Massachusetts	440,708	140,266	31.8%
Maryland	442,273	147,894	33.4%
Minnesota	422,642	149,346	35.3%
North Carolina	749,294	399,148	53.3%
New Mexico	170,799	102,783	60.2%
Ohio	844,935	407,228	48.2%
Oregon	280,737	140,433	50.0%
Rhode Island	66,881	25,997	38.9%
Washington	534,599	221,087	41.4%
Wisconsin	422,044	174,079	41.2%
All 14 Grantees	8,869,913	4,006,108	45.2%
All Other States	15,501,746	7,616,509	49.1%
United States	24,371,659	11,622,617	47.7%

*Data for children ages 0-5 from the Population Division, U.S. Census Bureau for data year 2012
http://www.census.gov/popest/data/historical/2010s/vintage_2012/index.html
**Data for children below 200 percent FPL from the American Community Survey (ACS) for data year 2012.
http://www.census.gov/acs/www/data_documentation/2012_release/

Table 1. Population estimates for children from birth through age 5, including those in families living below 200 percent of Federal poverty level

Children with High Needs

A distinct and unique focus of RTT-ELC is on ensuring that children with the highest needs have increased access to high-quality early learning experiences. A key indicator that is often used as a marker of children with high needs is the number of children who are from low-income families (that is, families having an income of up to 200 percent of the Federal Poverty Level). Table 1 shows the number and percentage of all children from birth to age 5 who live in low-income families in each of the 14 RTT-ELC States that are included in this report. Almost half (45.2 percent) of the children from birth through age 5 in these States are in families living at or below 200 percent of the Federal poverty level. In 2012, that was defined as $46,100 for a family of four.[vi]

In total, the first 14 RTT-ELC Grantee States include **more than 4 million children** from birth to age 5.[vii] This represents **34.5 percent of the more than 11 million children** from birth through age 5 in families living below 200 percent of the Federal Poverty Level in the United States.

In their APRs, RTT-ELC States reported the number and percentage of children with high needs in each of several special population categories; however, the same child could be reported in more than one category, and most State systems do not allow the data to be disaggregated by category in order to provide unduplicated counts of the number of children with high needs.
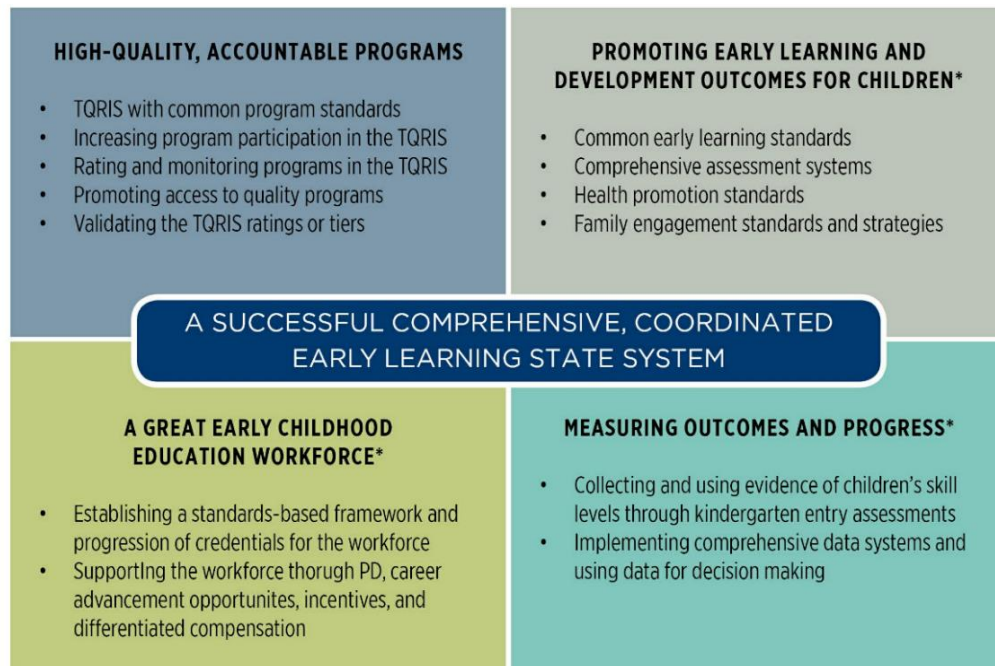
In addition to challenges with reporting unduplicated counts of children, the APRs reveal other data quality issues related to performance measures and other data elements reported in the APRs. Common data collection and reporting challenges include data that are not yet available due to revisions to data systems or to TQRIS rating levels, as well as variations in definitions used to describe data elements such as levels of educator credentials. When RTT-ELC and its related performance measures were established, ED and HHS expected that the data collection would be new and challenging for States, many of which are only now designing their early learning data systems and determining how to link them to their K-12 systems. Where data systems do exist, they are still in their infancy, so data sharing and comparability are still significant challenges. Given the newness of the data collection for the APR reporting, there are significant limitations in the information that can be drawn from the current data. ED and HHS are committed to helping RTT-ELC States improve the quality of their data. As States continue to develop their data collection and reporting practices over the four years of their RTT-ELC grants, they will be better able to provide reliable data on numbers of children and types of programs that are being reached through their RTT-ELC efforts.

RTT-ELC States submit Annual Performance Report (APR) data to ED and HHS each year as a requirement of the grant. In the spring of 2013, Phase 1 States reported their first APR data for calendar year 2012. In the spring of 2014, Phase 1 States and Phase 2 States submitted their APRs for calendar year 2013, their second and first APRs, respectively. This report provides information about the progress the 14 Phase 1 and Phase 2 States reported in their APRs for 2013.

RTT-ELC Framework for Reform

The RTT-ELC program allows States to develop comprehensive, State-level early learning systems and build a more unified approach to supporting young children and their families. These efforts require processes that include establishing effective governance structures and building broad-based participation by key State agencies and other partners. They also require a structure for the various initiatives and efforts undertaken by the State to work together to propel the entire State early learning system forward. For RTT-ELC grantees, this structure is the RTT-ELC framework (see figure 3 on the next page), which consists of five key reform levers: A) A Successful State System; B) High-Quality, Accountable Programs; C) Promoting Early Learning and Development Outcomes for Children; D) A Great Early Childhood Education Workforce; and E) Measuring Outcomes and Progress.[viii] The first two core areas of reform, A) A Successful Comprehensive, Coordinated Early Learning State System and B) High-Quality, Accountable Programs are required for all RTT-ELC grantees. The remaining three areas, called Focused Investment Areas, permit States to target their RTT-ELC resources to those reforms that will have the greatest impact given the needs, context, and readiness for reform in their individual States. Together all of these components form the building blocks of an effective early learning and development reform agenda.

THE RTT-ELC FRAMEWORK FOR REFORM

HIGH-QUALITY, ACCOUNTABLE PROGRAMS

- TQRIS with common program standards
- Increasing program participation in the TQRIS
- Rating and monitoring programs in the TQRIS
- Promoting access to quality programs
- Validating the TQRIS ratings or tiers

PROMOTING EARLY LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT OUTCOMES FOR CHILDREN*

- Common early learning standards
- Comprehensive assessment systems
- Health promotion standards
- Family engagement standards and strategies

A SUCCESSFUL COMPREHENSIVE, COORDINATED EARLY LEARNING STATE SYSTEM

A GREAT EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION WORKFORCE*

- Establishing a standards-based framework and progression of credentials for the workforce
- Supporting the workforce thorugh PD, career advancement opportunites, incentives, and differentiated compensation

MEASURING OUTCOMES AND PROGRESS*

- Collecting and using evidence of children's skill levels through kindergarten entry assessments
- Implementing comprehensive data systems and using data for decision making

*The components within these three reform building blocks are called Focused Investment Areas; States could choose which areas to address in their RTT-ELC State plans. The components within the High Quality, Accountable Programs building block are required under the grant and are common to all RTT-ELC plans.

Figure 3. RTT-ELC Framework for Reform

Building a Successful Comprehensive, Coordinated Early Learning State System

Many young children have early learning experiences in more than one setting. They could be in a Head Start program or a State-funded preschool in the morning and in a program funded by the Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF) for the rest of the day. They may spend part of the day in a program funded by the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). Each of these settings have separate systems of accountability, funding streams, standards for teachers, program standards, and data collection and reporting systems. This patchwork of services and systems may lead to inefficiencies, duplication or disruption of services, and ultimately lost opportunities for young children and confusion for their families.

The core of the RTT-ELC reform framework is helping States build comprehensive, coordinated early learning systems. All other reforms proposed by RTT-ELC States are dependent on a viable State system. In order to see results from various initiatives and efforts, RTT-ELC States agreed to implement those initiatives within a coordinated system that includes stakeholders from all sectors that provide programs and services for young children and their families. States agreed to develop governance structures that promote and oversee the implementation of multiple plans and approaches. They must ensure that the partners within the State are working from a single vision and coordinating their efforts to create

systems-level solutions that will stand the test of time and survive beyond the current leadership. The RTT-ELC framework requires States to work across programs and sectors and to integrate the perspectives of a variety of stakeholders in order to streamline and coordinate the often disparate early learning and development programs and services that families must navigate. States do not report separately on their systems-building work in their APRs; rather, this work supports all of their efforts and initiatives.

High-Quality, Accountable Programs

As part of their efforts to build and enhance coordinated State systems, RTT-ELC States are focused on developing high-quality, accountable programs for young children through their Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement Systems (TQRIS). Enhancing and strengthening their TQRIS is a required component of the State Plans for all RTT-ELC grantees.[ix] Within the TQRIS, programs are held accountable through the use of strategies and standards for rating and monitoring, improving, and communicating the quality of those early learning and development programs. States can use this program information to make policy decisions about programs and provide supports for continuing to improve quality. Families can use this information to make important decisions about the programs that their children attend.

Focused Investment Areas in RTT-ELC

In addition to the two core areas that are required for all RTT-ELC grantees *(Successful State Systems* and *High-Quality, Accountable Programs*), the RTT-ELC framework includes three Focused Investment Areas that allow States flexibility to choose reforms that are likely to have the greatest impact in their State and to invest their RTT-ELC grant funds in those areas. Each of these three areas consists of several components that States could select to address. *Focused Investment Area C: Promoting Early Learning and Development Outcomes for Children* includes promoting the use of common State developed early learning and development standards, developing comprehensive assessment systems, promoting healthy child development, and engaging families in their child's learning and development. *Focused Investment Area D: A Great Early Childhood Education Workforc*e includes supporting and strengthening the early childhood education workforce through a standards-based framework and progression of credentials, professional development and career advancement opportunities and other strategies. *Focused Investment Area E: Measuring Outcomes and Progress* includes collecting and using data to make decisions, and measuring children's progress through kindergarten entry assessments.

The first phase of RTT-ELC grantees (awarded in 2011) were required, at a minimum, to select two components within Focused Investment Area C, one component from Focused Investment Area D, and one component from Focused Investment Area E. Given reduced levels of available funding, Phase 2 grantees (awarded in 2012 and supplemented in 2013) were required to select components from two of the three Focused Investment Areas. The Core Areas and Focused Investment Areas addressed by each of the RTT-ELC grantees as part of their State Plans are indicated in table 2 on the next page.

Core Areas and Focused Investment Areas Addressed in RTT-ELC State Plans			
Core Areas (Required for all Grantees)			
Section A *Successful State Systems*		Total Number of States Addressing this Area in their RTT-ELC Plans	List of States Addressing this Area in their RTT-ELC Plans
	Demonstrating past commitment to early learning and development	14	All states
	Articulating the State's rationale for its early learning and development reform agenda and goals	14	All states
	Aligning and coordinating early learning and development across the State	14	All states
	Developing a budget to implement and sustain the work of this grant	14	All states
Section B *High-Quality Accountable Programs*		# of States Addressing Area	List of States Addressing this Area
	Developing and adopting a common, statewide Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System	14	All states
	Promoting participation in the State's Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System	14	All states
	Rating and monitoring Early Learning and Development Programs	14	All states
	Promoting access to high-quality Early Learning and Development Programs for Children with High Needs	14	All states
	Validating the effectiveness of State Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement Systems	14	All states
Focused Investment Areas			
Section C *Promoting Early Learning and Development Outcomes for Children*		# of States Addressing Area	List of States Addressing this Area
	Developing and using statewide, high-quality Early Learning and Development Standards	13	CA, CO, DE, MD, MA, MN, NM, NC, OH, OR, RI, WA, WI
	Supporting effective uses of Comprehensive Assessment Systems	8	CO, MD, MA, MN, NM, NC, OH, RI
	Identifying and addressing the health, behavioral, and developmental needs of Children with High Needs to improve school readiness	5	CA, DE, MD, NC, OR
	Engaging and supporting families	5	MD, MA, NC, WA, WI
Section D *Supporting and Strengthening the Early Childhood Workforce*		# of States Addressing Area	List of States Addressing this Area
	Developing a Workforce Knowledge and Competency Framework and a progression of credentials	10	CO, DE, MD, MN, NM, OH, OR, RI, WA, WI
	Supporting Early Childhood Educators in improving their knowledge, skills, and abilities	11	CA, CO, DE, IL, MD, MA, MN, NM, NC, OR, RI
Section E *Measuring Outcomes and Progress*		# of States Addressing	List of States Addressing this Area
	Understanding the status of children's learning and development at kindergarten entry	13	CA, CO, DE, IL, MD, MA, MN, NM, NC, OH, OR, RI, WA
	Building or enhancing an early learning data system to improve instruction, practices, services, and policies	10	MD, MA, MN, NM, NC, OH, OR, RI, WI

Table 2. Core Areas and Focused Investment Areas Addressed by RTT-ELC Grantees

IMPROVING QUALITY AND ACCESS IN EARLY LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT SYSTEMS

Corresponds to RTT-ELC Core Area B

Building Systems of Program Improvement

The Race to the Top – Early Learning Challenge (RTT-ELC) program presents an unprecedented opportunity for States to focus on their early learning and development systems for children from birth through age 5. In their APRs, the 14 States that began their RTT- ELC projects in 2012 and 2013 described the improvements to their systems through 2013 – improvements that are leading to higher quality early learning and development programs and increased access to high-quality programs for significantly more children with high needs.

In the 1990s, some States began a cross-agency, systems-level approach to program improvement with what became Quality Rating and Improvement Systems (QRIS). QRIS brought together efforts to develop program standards, improve professional development opportunities for early childhood educators, and give families the information they needed to find the right program for their children. These QRIS also included supports to help programs meet progressively higher standards. Initially, QRIS focused mainly on center-based child care programs and built higher levels of quality upon State child care licensing regulations (which set minimum requirements for health, safety, and child development).

An early source of funding for QRIS authorized by Congress was the Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF), which is administered by the Office of Child Care in HHS.

COMPONENTS OF AN EFFECTIVE QUALITY RATING AND IMPROVEMENT SYSTEM (QRIS)

☆ Statewide ☆
A comprehensive system

☆ Eligibility ☆
Participation by programs, including by child care centers and family child care homes

☆ Standards ☆
The quality indicators that define increasingly higher levels of program quality

☆ Monitoring and Accountability ☆
Tools to measure the quality of a program

☆ Program and Practitioner Supports ☆
Training, coaching, and consultation to help programs meet higher standards

☆ Incentives ☆
Grants, scholarships, and rewards to encourage and support meeting higher levels of quality

☆ Family and Consumer Education ☆
Using icons or visual aids (like stars) that parents and the public can use to identify the quality of programs

Figure 4. Components of an Effective QRIS.
Source: Government Performance and Results Act Measures, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families, Office of Child Care, last modified January 2, 2013,
http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/occ/resource/government-performance-and-results-act-gpra-measures.

The CCDF statute requires that a minimum of 4 percent of each State's CCDF expenditures be spent on quality activities. These "quality dollars" have supported States as they implemented their QRIS. [x]

Today, the majority of States and Territories have some form of a QRIS. These systems continue to evolve and be refined as the field learns more about how to improve quality experiences for young children. Evidence of this evolution can be seen in the Office of Child Care's seven components of an effective QRIS listed in figure 4 on the previous page and in the Office of Child Care data about the progress States and Territories are making in incorporating these seven components into their systems (see figure 5). Based on 2013 data from the Office of Child Care, of the RTT-ELC Phase 1 and Phase 2 States, eleven (**Colorado, Delaware, Illinois, Maryland, Minnesota, New Mexico, North Carolina, Ohio, Oregon, Rhode Island,** and **Wisconsin**) have incorporated all seven components that mark an effective QRIS into their State systems. RTT-ELC funding is allowing these States to expand their QRIS to more programs and to enhance their ability for providing high-quality early learning and education. Two RTT-ELC States (**Massachusetts** and **Washington**) have incorporated five or six of the seven components, and **California** has incorporated fewer than five of the seven components of an effective QRIS. In figure 5, the 14 RTT-ELC Phase 1 and Phase 2 States are marked with green diagonal lines. The six Phase 3 States are marked with dark blue diagonal lines.
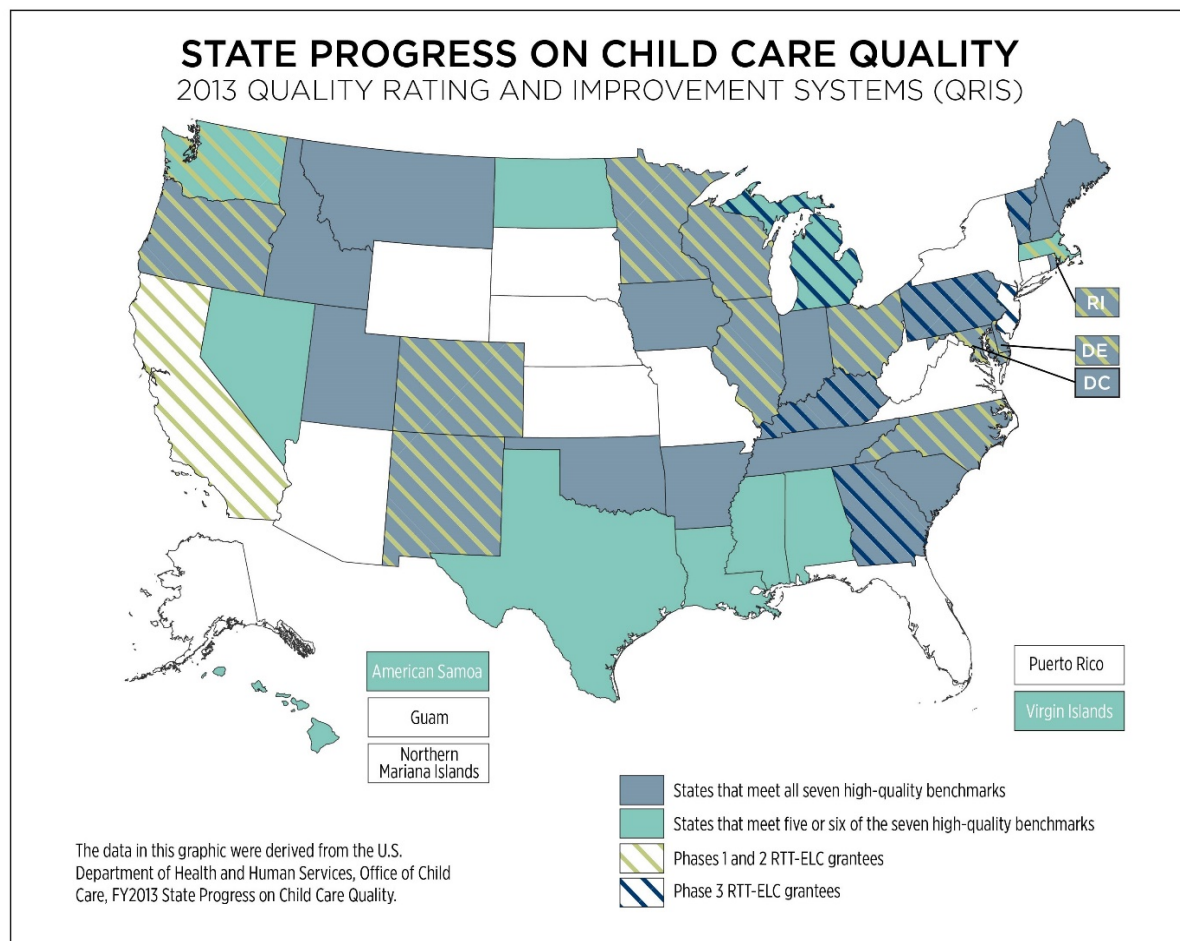

Figure 5. State Progress on Child Care Quality

FY2013 State Progress on Child Care Quality (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Office of Child Care)

The RTT-ELC program uses the term Tiered Quality Rating and Information Systems (TQRIS)[xi] to refer to QRIS supported through RTT-ELC funds in the grantee States. States with RTT-ELC funding have been able to emphasize bringing the system statewide and encouraging all types of early learning and development programs to participate. The evolution to a TQRIS within the RTT-ELC program is described in the next section of this report. States have different ways of organizing their TQRIS. Eleven of the 14 States (**California, Colorado, Delaware, Illinois, Maryland, North Carolina, Ohio, Oregon, Rhode Island, Washington,** and **Wisconsin)** have or are moving to five tiers or levels in their TQRIS. The remaining three States (**Massachusetts, Minnesota,** and **New Mexico**) have four tiers or levels (see figure 6).
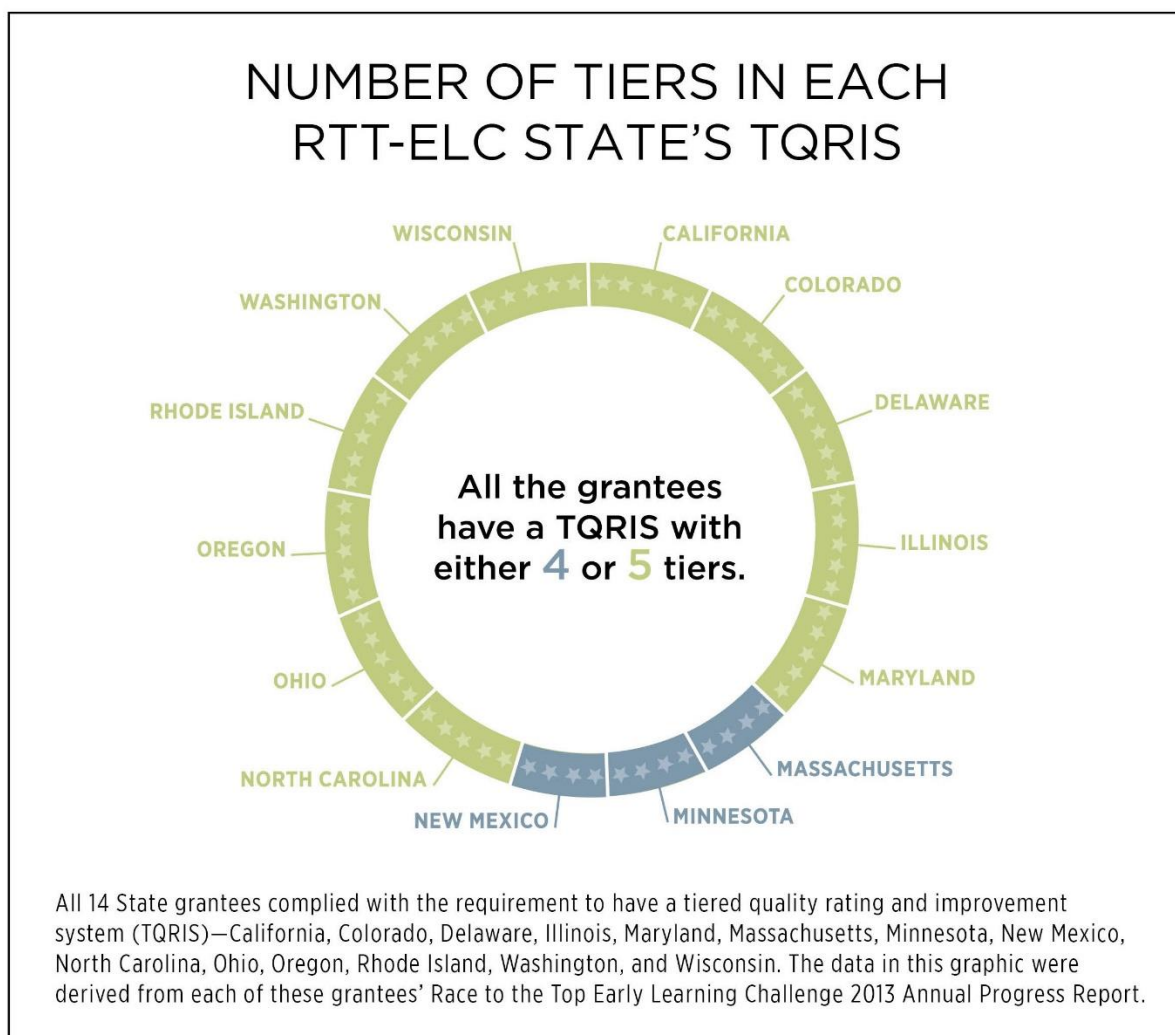
Figure 6. Number of Tiers, or Levels, in RTT-ELC States' TQRIS

TQRIS in RTT-ELC States

States that applied for an RTT-ELC grant were evaluated on the extent to which they either had a QRIS in place or were committed to establishing such a system. Grants were awarded in part based on how much States planned to improve, or in some cases reinvent, their QRIS. In RTT-ELC, these systems are referred to as TQRIS to emphasize the tiered aspect of a Quality Rating and Improvement System. Specifically, the RTT-ELC TQRIS is intended to highlight the importance of common tiers, or levels, across programs. RTT-

ELC requires States to examine whether the tiers in their TQRIS reflect meaningful differences in the levels of program quality so that families and other stakeholders know that a level 4 or 5 program is really of higher quality than a level 2 program.

In addition, RTT-ELC encourages States to improve the quality of early learning and development programs by designing and implementing a common, statewide TQRIS in which all licensed or State-regulated early learning and development programs are encouraged to participate, including State-funded preschool programs, Early Head Start and Head Start programs, programs funded under section 619 of Part B of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) and Part C of IDEA, programs funded under Title I of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, as well as programs receiving funds from the State's CCDF program. States are using a variety of strategies to improve their TQRIS and to increase access to high-quality programs for children with high needs. Examples of some of these strategies are presented in the Spotlight on States section below.

When RTT-ELC and its related performance measures were established, ED and HHS understood that many States did not yet have comprehensive and coordinated early learning data systems and that the data collection needed to document the progress under RTT-ELC would be new and challenging for many States. Currently, where data systems do exist, they are still in their infancy and may not be coordinated across sectors. This limits data sharing and data comparability, and results in significant limitations in the information that can be drawn from the current data. For example, many States do not have data systems that are able to provide disaggregated data for individual children by the type of program in which they are enrolled. Without unique child identifiers, States are often unable to determine if the same child is receiving services through multiple programs; therefore, the child would be counted in each program and enrollment numbers would be elevated. Despite these data challenges, States are making substantial progress in bringing more programs into their TQRIS and increasing the number of children who are enrolled in those high-quality programs. As State data collection efforts evolve, ED and HHS are committed to helping RTT-ELC States improve the quality of the data collection and reporting.

Improving Quality and Increasing Access for Children with High Needs

RTT-ELC requires States to expand TQRIS beyond child care programs to ensure that all children in every type of early learning and development program can have access to high-quality early education. States are using a variety of strategies to bring more and varied types of early learning and development programs in to their TQRIS so that they will have strategies and incentives to continually improve their quality.

Increasing the Number of Early Learning and Development Programs in the TQRIS

Increasing the number of early learning and development programs in a State's TQRIS requires thoughtful planning and a multipronged approach. Initially, QRIS focused on enrolling child care programs into the system. With RTT-ELC, QRIS has evolved into the TQRIS, which emphasizes bringing more programs, such as State-funded preschools and Early Head Start and Head Start, into the TQRIS in order to ensure that all families of children birth through age 5 have access to quality early learning opportunities regardless of where they receive services. RTT-ELC States are also exploring ways to include home-based programs that have not traditionally been included in the TQRIS, such as IDEA Part C early intervention services and home visiting programs. Figure 7 shows the progress RTT-ELC States are making in including more programs in the TQRIS.
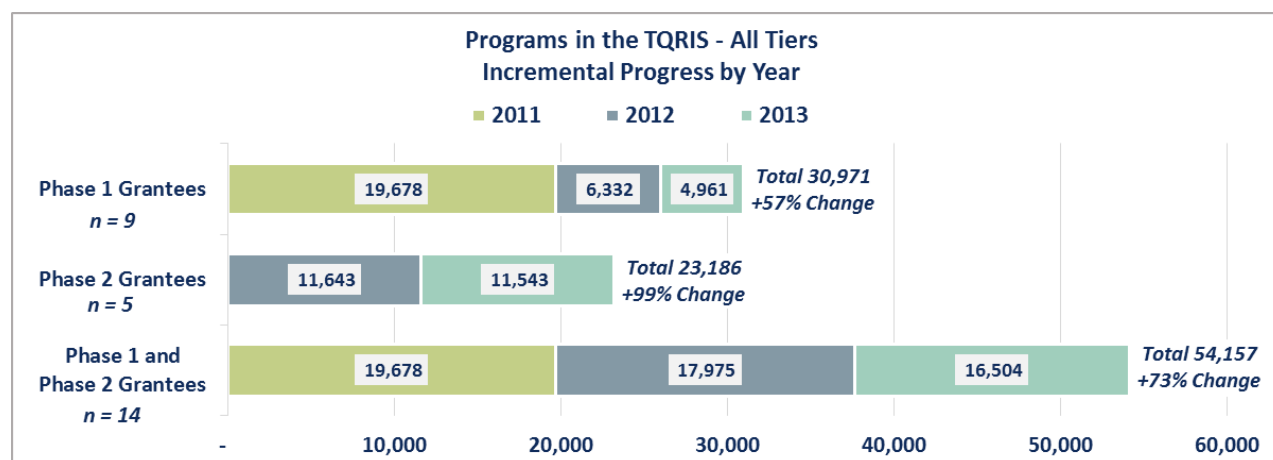
Source: 2013 APR Performance Measure B(4)(c)(1)

Figure 7. Number of Early Learning and Development Programs Participating in the States' TQRIS

Overall, Phase 1 and Phase 2 RTT-ELC grantees combined showed a 73 percent increase in the number of programs enrolled in their TQRIS. There were 31,321 programs enrolled in their TQRIS at the time of their applications (baseline) and 54,157 programs enrolled by the end of 2013.

- In Phase 1 States, the total number of programs in the States' TQRIS increased from 19,678 programs to 30,971 programs. This was a 57 percent increase from baseline to the end of 2013. Seven of the nine Phase 1 grantees reported an increase in the number of programs enrolled in the State's TQRIS. The number of programs decreased in one State (**North Carolina**) and remained constant in another State (**Washington**).

- o **North Carolina** and **Washington** require licensed programs to participate in their TQRIS, which results in higher participation levels in TQRIS. For this reason the number of programs participating is not expected to increase significantly in these States.
  - o In 2013, the total number of regulated programs decreased in **North Carolina** so the number of programs eligible to be in the States' TQRIS decreased.
  - o **Washington** reported the total number of sites that are eligible to participate in the TQRIS, so its numbers remain constant.

- During their first reporting year, only one of the Phase 2 States (**Illinois**) showed an increase in early learning and development programs in the TQRIS, increasing from 778 to 12,734 programs. One State (**New Mexico)** reported no change in the number of programs in the TQRIS. Overall, the number of programs in Phase 2 States increased from 11,643 programs from baseline to 23,186 programs at the end of 2013.

- Three Phase 2 grantees reported slight declines in programs in the States' TQRIS. Reasons for decreases in the numbers of participating programs are complex and varied:

  - o **Colorado** and **Oregon** noted slight decreases as they transition from their current QRIS to their new TQRIS.
  - o **Wisconsin** saw a decrease in the overall number of child care providers throughout 2013, due in part to rigorous YoungStar requirements, changing demographics, and reduction in workforce participation rates.

See Appendix A, Table 1 for State-specific data.

Increasing the Number of Programs in the Top Two Tiers of the TQRIS

While States are making progress in getting more programs in their TQRIS, the process of rating these programs and supporting them in moving up through the state-defined tiers of quality takes considerable time and effort. During these initial years of their grants, many States are focused on enrolling more programs first and then on enhancing their rating and monitoring systems in the coming months and years.

As shown in figure 6, eight RTT-ELC States have five tiers or levels in their TQRIS. For these States the data presented in Figure 8 reflect the number of programs in tiers 4 and 5. Three States have 4 tiers, so their data reflect the number of programs in tiers 3 and 4. Two States (**Colorado** and **Illinois**) are transitioning from 4 to 5 tiers, so their data reflect the number of programs in tiers 3 and 4. **Ohio** is transitioning from 3 to 5 tiers, but in 2013 it had no programs in tier 5, so Ohio's data are the number of programs in tiers 3 and 4. States set their own quality standards for the various levels in their TQRIS so, for example, a level 3 rating in one State is not necessarily equivalent to a level 3 rating in another State.

- All 14 grantees combined showed a 47 percent increase from 5,578 programs in the top two tiers of their TQRIS from the baseline to 8,214 programs by the end of 2013.

- Phase 1 grantees showed a 46 percent increase from 4,463 programs in the top two tiers of the States' TQRIS from baseline to 6,509 programs by the end of 2013. Seven of the nine Phase 1 grantees reported increases in the number of programs in the top two tiers of their TQRIS. One grantee (**Washington**) reported a decline, due to program closures, and one grantee (**Ohio**) did not report baseline data with which to compare data at the end of 2013.

- Overall, Phase 2 grantees showed an increase from 1,115 programs in the top two tiers of their TQRIS from baseline to 1,705 programs by the end of 2013, a 53 percent increase. This increase

was due to one grantee (**Wisconsin**) that reported an increase in the number of programs in the top two tiers of their TQRIS. Two other grantees (**Colorado** and **New Mexico**) reported slight decreases and one grantee (Oregon) did not have baseline data with which to compare.

Programs in the TQRIS - Top Two Tiers
Incremental Progress by Year

■ 2011　■ 2012　■ 2013

Phase 1 Grantees n = 9	4,463	346　1,700	Total 6,509 +46% Change
Phase 2 Grantees n = 5	1,115　590	Total 1,705 +53% Change	
Phase 1 and Phase 2 Grantees n = 14	4,463	1,461　2,290	Total 8,214 +47% Change

-　1,000　2,000　3,000　4,000　5,000　6,000　7,000　8,000　9,000
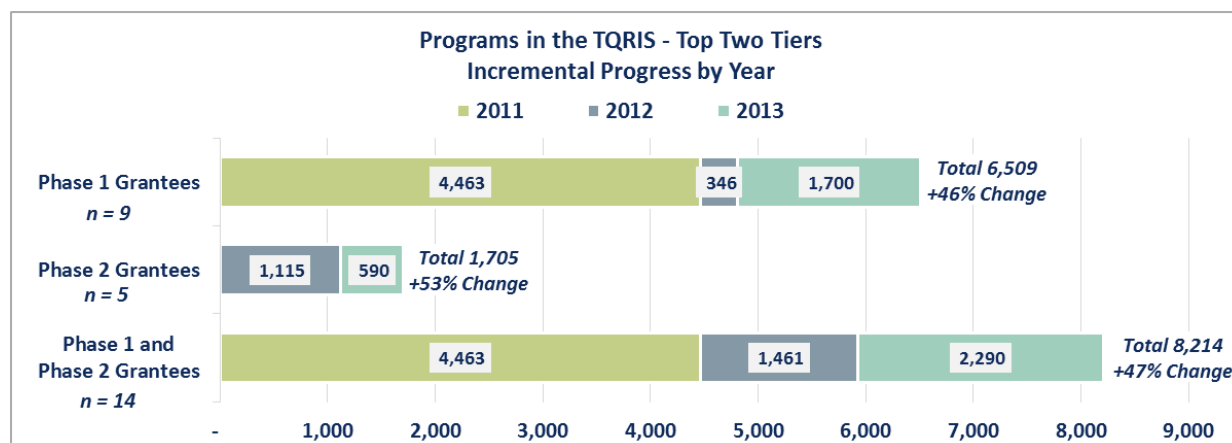
Source: 2013 APR Performance Measure B(4)(c)(1)

Figure 8. Number of Early Learning and Development Programs in the Top Two Tiers of the States' TQRIS

See Appendix A, Table 2 for State-specific data and additional data notes from the grantees' APRs.

Increasing Access to High-Quality Programs for Children with High Needs

Families often struggle to find early learning and development programs that are affordable, are of high quality, and meet their needs. RTT-ELC States are using innovative strategies to inform parents of the availability of high-quality early learning and development programs in their communities. One of the key goals of the RTT-ELC program is to increase the number of children with high needs who are enrolled in high-quality programs. States are measuring their progress by collecting data on the number of children who are enrolled in programs that are in the top tiers of the State's TQRIS.

Figures 9 through 11 present data on the number of children with high needs who are in State-funded preschools, CCDF-funded programs, and Head Start and Early Head Start programs that are in the top two tiers of States' TQRIS. The numbers of children are reported by type of program. Children may be enrolled in more than one of these programs and States do not have unduplicated counts of children in their TQRIS. States are struggling to define how many discrete children are served by the programs in their TQRIS.

Children with high needs enrolled in State-funded preschool programs in the top tiers of the TQRIS

- Overall, the Phase 1 and Phase 2 grantees showed a 175 percent increase in the number of children with high needs in State-funded preschool programs in the top tiers of the States' TQRIS between the time of their applications (baseline) and the end of 2013. The number of children increased from 36,732 to 101,095. Many States are still working through the issues related to the implementation of their statewide TQRIS for State-funded preschool programs; therefore, the numbers of such programs in State TQRIS is expected to increase in future years.

- Six of the nine Phase 1 grantees reported increases in the number of children with high needs enrolled in State-funded preschool programs in the top tiers. These States reported an increase from 28,646 children to 77,912 children by the end of 2013, a 172 percent increase from baseline (the application year) to the end of 2013. One State (**Maryland**) reported a decrease, and another State (**Ohio**) did not report data as their publicly-funded preschool programs began the rating process during the 2013-2014 school year.

- Phase 2 grantees were just beginning to focus on enrolling their State-funded preschool programs in the States' TQRIS. Only one State (**Colorado**) reported baseline and 2013 data on the number of children with high needs in the top tiers of their State-funded preschool programs, and it reported a slight decrease. Three States (**New Mexico**, **Oregon** and **Wisconsin**) did not report data in 2013 due to a variety of factors, including data collection issues and transitions to new TQRIS. By the end of 2013, there were 23,183 children with high needs in the top tiers of their State-funded preschool programs in Phase 2 States.
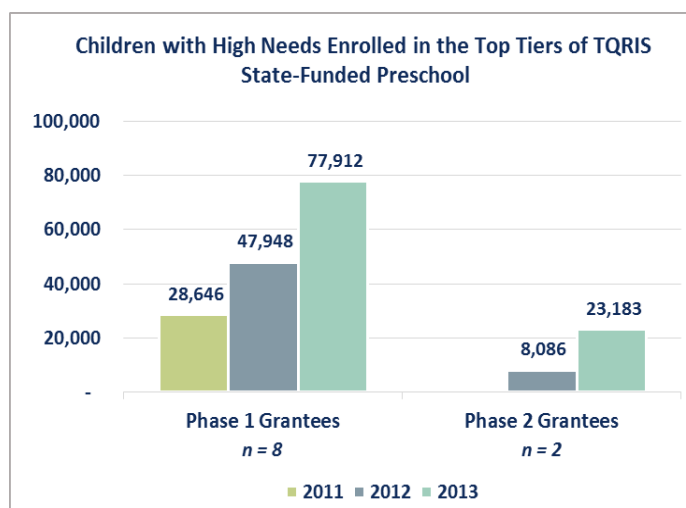
Source: 2013 APR Performance Measure B(4)(c)(2)

Figure 9. Number of Children with High Needs Enrolled in State-Funded Preschool Programs That Are in the Top Tiers of the States' TQRIS.

State-specific data on the number of children with high needs enrolled in high-quality State-funded preschool programs are included in Appendix B. Grantees also included specific information related to their data in the "data notes" sections of their APRs; relevant data notes are also included as footnotes to the data tables in Appendix B, Table 3.

Children with high needs enrolled in CCDF-funded programs in the top tiers of the TQRIS

- Overall, the RTT-ELC grantees showed a 43 percent increase in the number of children with high needs enrolled in CCDF-funded programs in the top tiers of the TQRIS from baseline to the end of 2013. The numbers increased from 112,702 to 160,611 children.

- Phase 1 Grantees showed a 48 percent increase in the number of children with high needs enrolled in CCDF-funded programs in the top tiers from baseline to the end of 2013, with an increase from 86,222 to 127,867 children. Eight of the nine Phase 1 grantees reported an increase in the number of children in CCDF-funded programs in the top tiers of the State's TQRIS. One State (**North Carolina**) reported a decrease due to a decline in the total number of CCDF-funded programs.
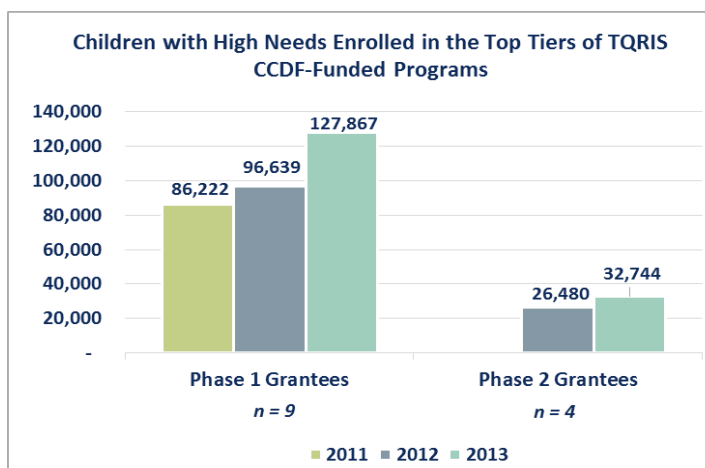

Source: 2013 APR Performance Measure B(4)(c)(2)

Figure 10. Number of Children with High Needs Enrolled in CCDF-Funded Programs That Are in the Top Tiers of the States' TQRIS.

- Three of the five Phase 2 grantees showed a total increase from 26,480 to 32,744 children with high needs in CCDF-funded programs in the top tiers from baseline to the end of 2013 – a 24 percent increase. One State (**Oregon**) did not report baseline data, and another State (**Colorado**) did not report data for this category because its current data collection methods do not allow for reporting specific data for children with high needs enrolled in CCDF-funded programs.

State-specific data and additional information from APR data notes about the number of children with high needs enrolled in high-quality CCDF-funded programs are included in Appendix B, Table 4.

Children with high needs enrolled in Early Head Start and Head Start programs in the top tiers of the TQRIS

- Overall, the RTT-ELC grantees showed an 83 percent increase in the number of children with high needs enrolled in Early Head Start and Head Start Programs in the top tiers of the TQRIS. The numbers increased from 56,262 children at baseline to 102,728 at the end of 2013.

- All nine of the Phase 1 grantees showed an increase in the number of children with high needs in Early Head Start and Head Start programs in the top tiers of
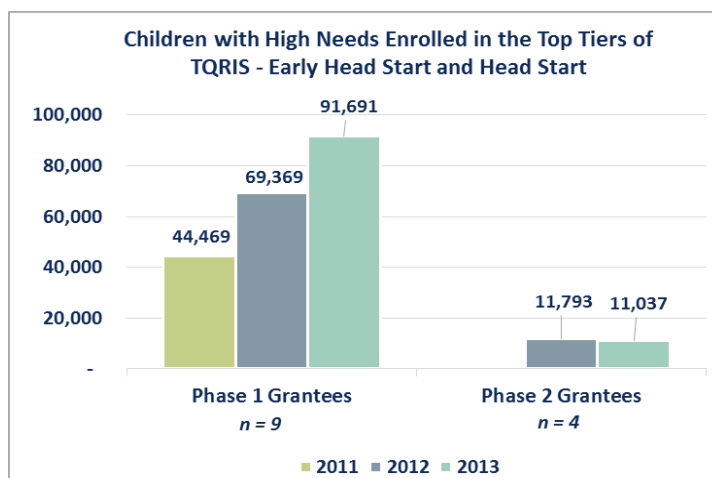
Source: 2013 APR Performance Measure B(4)(c)(2)

Figure 11. Number of Children with High Needs Enrolled in Early Head Start and Head Start Programs That Are in the Top Tiers of the States' TQRIS.

the TQRIS. Overall the Phase 1 grantees reported an increase from 44,469 to 91,691 children at the end of 2013 – an increase of 106 percent.

- Overall, Phase 2 grantees showed a decrease of 6 percent in the number of children with high needs in Early Head Start and Head Start programs that are in the top tiers of the TQRIS. The numbers decreased from 11,793 children at baseline to 11,037 children at the end of 2013. Much of this decrease was attributed to one State (**Colorado)** resolving duplicated counts of programs in their baseline number. One State (**New Mexico**) reported a slight decrease, which the State attributed in part to the impact of sequestration. One Phase 2 State (**Wisconsin**) reported an increase of 551 children for this performance measure. One State (**Illinois**) did not report baseline data with which to compare, and one State (**Oregon**) did not report data as it is revising its TQRIS.

  - **Illinois** encountered delays in developing a process for including Head Start and Early Head Start programs in the State's TQRIS, so they did not report baseline data.
  - **Oregon** is launching a revised TQRIS. Many Head Start programs are exempt from State licensing but are interested in becoming licensed and applying for a star rating.

State-specific data and information from APR data notes about the number of children with high needs enrolled in high-quality Early Head Start and Head Start programs are included in Appendix B, Table 5.

Spotlight on States

The following are examples from the 2013 State Annual Performance Reports.

RTT-ELC States are increasing the number of early learning and development programs participating in their TQRIS.

Increasing the number of early learning and development programs in a State's TQRIS requires thoughtful planning and a multipronged approach. States that link the TQRIS system to their licensing system or States that have had a TQRIS system for a number of years have a significantly larger number of programs participating in their TQRIS.

> **Maryland** began field testing their EXCELS TQRIS Program Standards in November 2012. The 330 programs in the field test represented center-based child care, family child care homes, public Pre-Kindergarten, and school-age child care programs that volunteered to participate and test the online system. These programs provided valuable feedback by participating in surveys and focus groups. On July 1, 2013, Maryland EXCELS TQRIS opened for statewide participation. The number of programs participating grew from 330 to 1,579 from July 1, 2013 to December 31, 2013. Also, as of December 31, 2013, 221 programs had published their ratings on the EXCELS website. As the evaluation of information gained from the field test was reviewed, the decision was made to enter into a revision phase of the Program Standards. The revised Program Standards have been released for comment, reviewed by early childhood and child care stakeholder groups, national experts and technical assistance providers. Programs currently participating or published in Maryland EXCELS will have 12 months to meet the revised standards. Maryland is one of several

States that is using financial incentives, training, and technical assistance to promote quality improvements, like meeting Maryland's revised program standards, in the programs in their TQRIS.

Once programs are enrolled in a State's TQRIS, the State helps them improve their quality and their ranking. States are providing technical assistance, professional development opportunities, and program improvement grants that allow programs to make the necessary quality improvements.

Rhode Island is providing significant support to early learning and development programs that are committed to continuous quality improvement. The State makes Program Quality Improvement grants available to eligible programs that have a rating in BrightStars, the State's TQRIS. In 2013, Rhode Island also provided a grant opportunity to family child care programs, which qualified for up to $5,000, and to child care centers, which qualified for up to $30,000. Funds could be used for quality improvements designed to increase ratings, such as helping staff meet competency requirements or advancing teaching practices that support learning and development outcomes for children. A total of $554,850 was awarded to 93 programs, including 12 public schools, 56 family child care programs, and 25 child care centers.

Washington has developed a strong coaching model for early childhood programs that are rated at levels three to five in the TQRIS. In addition, more intense coaching is offered to programs receiving a rating of one or two in the TQRIS to ensure that these programs receive the appropriate amount of coaching necessary to increase quality. Additionally, Washington is building a virtual coaching model that will complement on-site coaching work. As part of this virtual model, participants will be able to view and upload videos that demonstrate progress toward quality improvement goals.

All RTT-ELC States are working to increase access for all families to programs that are in the highest tiers of their TQRIS.

Families often struggle to find early learning programs that are affordable, are of high quality, and meet their needs. RTT-ELC States are using creative strategies to inform parents of the availability of high-quality early learning and development programs in their communities.

Minnesota is taking two approaches to helping families with low incomes find high-quality early learning programs for their children. First, it is making scholarships of up to $5,000 per child available to families who are income eligible who choose a program that is participating in Parent Aware, the State's TQRIS. These scholarships have spurred stronger interest among programs in the State's TQRIS. Second, Minnesota has established a new Child Care Assistance Program policy that makes 3- and 4-star-rated child care programs eligible for higher reimbursement rates from the State.

North Carolina has made a long-term commitment to ensuring that publicly funded programs are providing high-quality settings for young children. The TQRIS is tied to licensing, which means all licensed programs are automatically enrolled at the one star level. All Head Start and Early Head Start programs in the State are licensed and participate in the TQRIS. While school districts are not required to be licensed, all except two districts voluntarily participate in the TQRIS. A law is now in effect that requires all preschool programs become licensed.

All RTT-ELC States are working to streamline the rating and monitoring of early learning and development programs in their TQRIS.

States face many challenges in developing a rating and monitoring process for their TQRIS. Providers must be informed about the process, so as to make them more likely to participate. The observation and rating tool must be a true measure of different levels of quality; it must give the same rating results in many different settings, and it has to be easy to use.

California established a Rating and Monitoring workgroup, which used guidelines established by the developers of the rating tools that California uses to help ensure that all raters were getting similar results. User-friendly assessment report formats and support materials have been developed for TQRIS participants to further ensure their understanding of the overall rating process. An Implementation Guide clarifies site selection and rating criteria to ensure successful and consistent rating of programs.

Ohio understands the key role that valid and reliable program quality assessment tools play in the rating and monitoring process of a TQRIS. The State created the Ohio Classroom Observation Tool (OCOT) to assess the quality of the classroom environment and staff-child interactions for programs that received a 3- to 5-star rating as part of their TQRIS verification process. Staff who complete the OCOT have undergone extensive training and have established reliability in the use of the tool. Ohio will continue to analyze OCOT data, along with data from similar tools completed concurrently with the OCOT, to further document its validity as a measure of classroom quality.

All RTT-ELC States are making progress in validating their TQRIS.

Validating the effectiveness of a TQRIS ensures that it is measuring and assessing program quality in ways that make sense to State policy makers, early learning programs, and families with young children.

To prepare for its validation study, **Delaware** sought extensive input from all key stakeholders for the TQRIS, including elected and appointed officials, policy makers, community foundations, business leaders, advocates, technical assistance and professional development leaders, and early childhood program providers on the State's evaluation questions. Delaware used this information to clarify and prioritize its TQRIS evaluation questions, award a contract for the evaluation study beginning in January 2014, and to establish an Evaluation Committee.

Some States are enhancing their TQRIS data systems and collection methods.

RTT-ELC States are developing data system linkages between their tiered quality rating and improvement systems and other systems with data on young children and the early childhood workforce.

Colorado has begun the process of enhancing its TQRIS to link to other State data systems, including its early childhood professional development registry and quality incentives grants system to ensure interoperability among the three systems. The enhanced system will streamline the process for early childhood programs as they work to advance to higher levels of quality and individuals in the workforce as they track their educational advancement. Also, Colorado is undergoing a data mapping process to ensure that the data elements included in the enhanced TQRIS align with the National Registry Alliance and the Common Education Data Standards[xii] – both of which represent examples of standardized early childhood data elements, definitions, and recommended relationship data models.

Some States are prioritizing investments in a better functioning TQRIS data system.

Wisconsin found that further improvements and additional systemic investments were needed to ensure the consistency and accuracy of TQRIS data entry, which, in turn, are needed to ensure the validity and reliability of the ratings. In response, the Wisconsin team selected an online data system to support its TQRIS raters in observing program environments. This system uses a tablet to automate data entry and subsequent report writing. Once implemented, the system is expected to increase the accuracy and speed of YoungStar environment ratings.

SUPPORTING THE EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION WORKFORCE

Corresponds to RTT-ELC Focused Investment Area D

There is a difference between playing "Ring Around the Rosie" with 3-year-olds during the day solely because the children enjoy it, and intentionally planning to play "Ring around the Rosie" based on the knowledge that 3-year-olds are capable of cooperating; they learn language and literacy through rhyming; and they can pick themselves up after deliberately falling down. The activity looks the same to parents and feels the same to the children. But over time, planned activities will build on a child's developing skills and knowledge, and will encourage more growth in all areas of development. With this development, children are more likely to arrive at kindergarten with the skills, knowledge, and dispositions toward learning they need to be successful in school and in life.

The RTT-ELC program requires all 14 States to address how they will support a great early childhood education workforce. A well-trained and properly supported early childhood education workforce understands how to provide high-quality early learning experiences for young children. It is an essential element of high-quality early learning and education programs.

A Workforce Knowledge and Competency Framework outlines what early childhood educators should know and be able to teach young children.[xiii] It provides the foundation for a well-qualified and prepared early childhood education workforce (see figure 12). It should guide postsecondary institutions in the development of curricula, and it should direct professional development providers who offer training,

mentoring, and coaching in the community. The Framework should also support individual professional development efforts for early childhood educators. As they move from a Child Development Associate (CDA) credential or State credential, to an associate degree, to a bachelor's degree and beyond, early childhood educators should be building on commonly defined, previously learned information and skills.

Ten States (**Colorado, Delaware, Maryland, Minnesota, New Mexico, Ohio, Oregon, Rhode Island, Washington,** and **Wisconsin**) chose to address Focused Investment Area (D)(1), for which States were required to report progress on the development of a Workforce Knowledge and Competency Framework. They chose to address the development of a common, statewide progression of credentials and degrees that were aligned with the framework.

SUPPORTING A GREAT EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION WORKFORCE

COMPETENCIES

Early childhood educator competencies that are aligned with State early learning and development standards and include knowledge of multiple content areas

CAREER PROGRESSION

Establishing a common progression of credentials and degrees so early childhood educators can move up a career ladder and continually develop their knowledge and skills

CREDENTIALS/DEGREES

Postsecondary institutions and professional development providers aligning their professional development opportunities and credentials and diplomas

TRAINING/PD

Providing and expanding access to training and professional development opportunities, such as coaching and mentoring

All 14 State grantees addressed at least one component of *D: A great early childhood education workforce.*

Figure 12. Supporting a Great Early Childhood Education Workforce

Eleven States (**California**, **Colorado, Delaware, Illinois, Maryland, Massachusetts, Minnesota, New Mexico, North Carolina, Oregon,** and **Rhode Island**) chose to spend RTT-ELC funds on Focused Investment Area (D)(2). These States documented the extent to which they had a high-quality plan to improve the effectiveness and retention of early childhood educators who work with children with high needs. States described two basic strategies:

(1) States are providing and expanding access to professional development opportunities that are aligned with their Workforce Knowledge and Competency Framework and that tightly link training with professional development approaches, such as coaching and mentoring.
(2) States are using incentives such as scholarships, compensation and wage supplements, tiered reimbursement rates, other financial incentives, and other strategies such as management

opportunities to promote professional improvement and career advancement along an articulated career pathway that is based on the State's Workforce Knowledge and Competency Framework (see figure 13).

Figure 13. Workforce Policies and Incentives in RTT-ELC States

States that chose (D)(2) must demonstrate that more early childhood educators are receiving training in postsecondary institutions and community-based professional development programs whose curricula are aligned with the Frameworks (see figure 14 for performance measure D(2)(d)1 on the next page).

States that chose (D)(2) also must document that more postsecondary institutions and community-based professional development programs are aligning their curricula with the State's Framework (performance measure D(2)(d)(2)).

States like **Maryland, Minnesota,** and **North Carolina** with declines in numbers attributed the change to improvements in data collection methods that resulted in eliminating duplicated records, delays in getting current graduation information from institutions of higher education, and backlogs in entering credentialing information into the database.
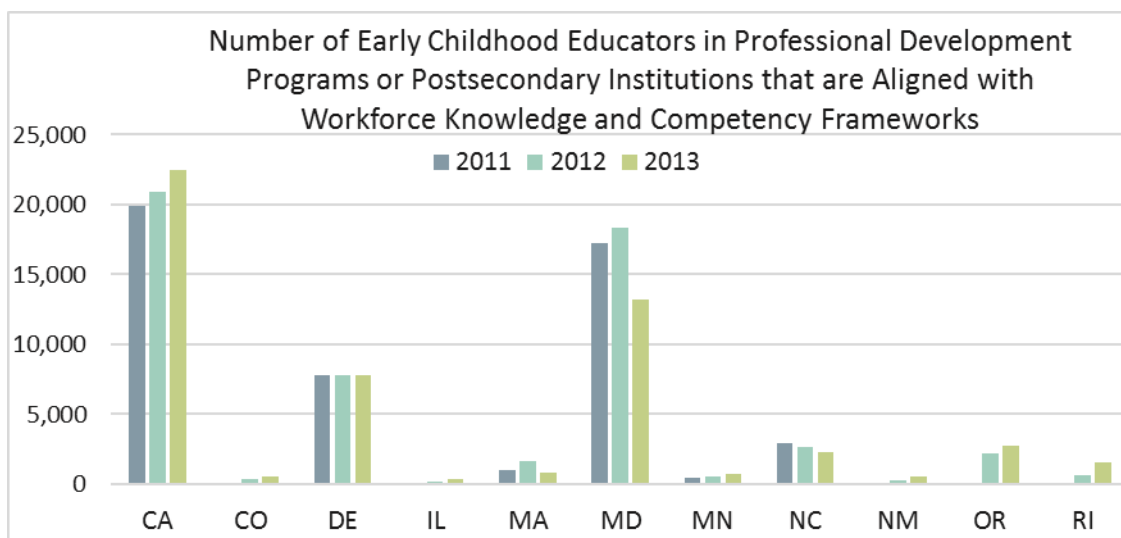
Source: RTT-ELC 2013 APR. Performance measure (D)(2)(d)(1). Rhode Island did not report 2011 baseline data. Ohio, Washington, and Wisconsin did not select this Focused Investment Area.

Figure 14: Number of Early Childhood Educators in Professional Development Programs or Postsecondary Institutions That Are Aligned with Workforce Knowledge and Competency Frameworks

Eleven States reported data for performance measure D(2)(d)(1)(figure 14) about the number of early childhood educators who were credentialed by postsecondary institutions or professional development providers that are aligned to the States' Workforce Knowledge and Competency Framework. Six of the States (**California, Colorado, Illinois, Minnesota, New Mexico,** and **Oregon**) reported an increase in the number of credentialed early childhood educators from baseline to the end of 2013. Three States reported decreases (**Maryland, Massachusetts,** and **North Carolina**) and one state remained constant (**Delaware**).

Spotlight on States

The following are examples from the 2013 State Annual Performance Reports.

The 11 RTT-ELC States that chose to focus on(D)(1) reported making progress in establishing a common statewide progression of credentials and aligning postsecondary coursework and credentials with the State's Workforce Knowledge and Competency Framework.

States have identified the importance of collaborating at the State level to help ensure that early childhood educators throughout the State receive consistent professional learning opportunities.

In some RTT-ELC States, the community colleges are working together to give early childhood educators common experiences that are tied to the State framework.

> In **Colorado,** 17 community colleges in the Colorado Early Childhood Family Coalition are working to align the community college early childhood certificate and degree programs with the State's early childhood competencies framework.

Oregon community colleges are creating an early childhood certificate that would consist of the same number of credits at all colleges, would link to the State registry. This certificate could be applied toward an associate degree. Oregon is also working to align coursework to its Core Body of Knowledge workforce standards and National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) standards.

Other States are focused on the importance of the unique educational requirements for professionals working with young children.

New Mexico is implementing two new early childhood teacher pathways within the formal early childhood licensing system. It is dividing the current birth through age 8 license into two licenses: birth through age 4, and age 3 through third grade. The State also fully implemented the new Family Infant Toddler career pathway with corresponding associate and bachelor's degree certification.

Rhode Island finalized Workforce Knowledge and Competencies for teachers (including early childhood special educators), teacher assistants, and family child care providers. Rhode Island awarded a contract to implement a new Professional Development/Technical Assistance Center which will align professional development with the Rhode Island Workforce Knowledge and Competencies and expand professional development opportunities to the current workforce.

Illinois is providing opportunities and incentives for early childhood educators to advance through Illinois' career pathway, referred to as their Gateway to Opportunity professional development system. The credentials can be earned by completing an approved program at an approved college or university that has aligned its program to the State's professional development framework.

Wisconsin is developing a cross-sector coordinated professional development approach at the State level.

In **Wisconsin**, a professional development coordinator acts as an "air traffic controller" for professional development in the State. The coordinator organizes professional development activities to avoid overlap and conflict, maximize resource usage, and maximize coordination of professional development offerings and opportunities across sectors. In addition, the professional development coordinator provides planning support, manages the new Professional Development Portfolio, and supports cross-sector networking activities.

The 11 RTT-ELC States that chose to focus on (D)(2) reported making progress in improving the effectiveness and retention of early childhood educators who work with children with high needs.

States described how they were supporting the early childhood education workforce with professional development opportunities. States are using scholarships, compensation and wage supplements, tiered reimbursement rates and other financial incentives; and management opportunities to promote professional and career advancement.

Between 2012 and 2015, **Massachusetts** is funding three cohorts of 15 experienced early childhood educators to complete a 12 credit Post Master's Certificate program in Early Education Research, Policy, and Leadership. The goal of this advanced graduate program is to provide Master's-educated professionals with the advanced leadership skills they need to serve as future leaders in the early education field. Advanced graduate courses are offered on Saturdays and in a

blended format, with approximately half of the classes taking place online. The format of these course offerings will allow educators to advance their leadership skills on a schedule that meets their needs as active teaching professionals. The State will cover the full cost of tuition, fees, and books, as well as provide each student with a stipend.

Some States are coordinating the types of education and professional development experiences that early childhood educators receive in the State.

Ohio is focusing on bringing common professional development standards to the early childhood educators in the State. Child care providers and the State's two-year higher education institutions have been using an Early Childhood Core Knowledge and Competencies (CKC) framework and a CKC Instructor Guide to prepare pre-service teachers. However, district preschool programs and Ohio's four-year higher education institutions have primarily used the Ohio K12 Educator Standards rather than Ohio's CKC. This means that two early childhood educators who work in the same setting may have received very different training, one based on K-12 standards and the

other early childhood standards. At the direction of RTT-ELC leadership team, external consultants drafted a bridging document for CKC and K-12 educator standards that would bring these two sets of standards into alignment. Ohio has developed a plan to review and revise the CKC and ensure that the materials are utilized by professional development providers, institutions of higher education, and local program providers in all sectors.

A challenging and all too familiar issue for the early learning field is retaining qualified staff.

Two examples of States that are having difficulty recruiting and retaining staff are California and New Mexico.

In **California,** difficulty in hiring qualified coaches has led to a delay in implementing some of their planned TQRIS continuous quality improvement activities. California's hiring challenges were due in part to a lack of available highly qualified personnel, as well as county hiring restrictions. Many of the consortia in California's State RTT-ELC project attempted to overcome these challenges by collaborating with partner agencies to share in coaching responsibilities. However, several consortia experienced challenges in creating supports for training and supervision and in maintaining standards of quality across different agencies.

In **New Mexico,** high turnover of early childhood educators and consultants has made sustainability difficult. Inability to support higher wages, attractive offers in other States, challenging financial times, and program management challenges have all contributed to staff turnover. One strategy that New Mexico is using to address this problem is making scholarships available to prospective early childhood consultants and faculty. The State is also implementing Leadership Academies to improve retention and compensation for program administrators.

UNDERSTANDING CHILDREN'S STATUS AT KINDERGARTEN ENTRY

Corresponds to RTT-ELC Focused Investment Area (E)(1)

One of the great wonders of watching young children is that their joy in experimenting is infectious. They wonder where rain comes from, how a plant grows, and how caterpillars change to butterflies. They ask questions; they come up with ideas; they try the same thing over and over again to see if they'll get the same response; they come up with answers; and they confidently share their conclusions. Their conclusions are based on observations and connecting ideas.

A good early learning and development program helps children refine their scientific methods into lifelong learning tools. It makes sense that we should apply this same process to understanding whether the investments we are making with young children are working.

One of the major goals of RTT-ELC is to ensure that children start kindergarten with a strong foundation for future learning and academic success. Kindergarten Entry Assessments (KEAs) are important tools for determining what children know and are able to do by the time they reach kindergarten.

KEA Defined

For States that have chosen to address this area, a KEA should have the following characteristics:

- It is administered to children during the first few months of their entering kindergarten.
- It covers all the Essential Domains of School Readiness[xiv] (see the definition in figure 15).
- Its use conforms with the recommendations of the National Research Council reports on early childhood.[xv]
- It is valid and reliable for its intended purposes and for the target populations and is aligned to the State's early learning and development standards.

Results of the KEA should be used to provide information to help close the school readiness gap at kindergarten entry and to inform instruction in the early elementary school grades. They should also be used to inform parents about their children's status and involve them in decisions about their children's education. KEAs should not be used to prevent children's entry into kindergarten or as a single measure for high-stakes decisions. [xvi]

Essential Domains of School Readiness

- Language and literacy development
- Cognition and general knowledge (including early mathematics and early scientific development)
- Approaches toward learning
- Physical well-being and motor development (including adaptive skills)
- Social and emotional development

Figure 15. Essential Domains of School Readiness as defined in the RTT-ELC Notice Inviting Applications

Thirteen of the 14 Phase 1 and 2 RTT-ELC States (**California, Colorado, Delaware, Illinois, Maryland, Massachusetts, Minnesota, New Mexico, North Carolina, Ohio, Oregon, Rhode Island,** and **Washington**) chose to address Focused Investment Area (E)(1). (Wisconsin adopted the PALS Literacy screener, which is not a comprehensive KEA, as the statewide literacy assessment in 2012. Wisconsin chose to use RTT-ELC funds for other priorities.)

Thirteen RTT-ELC States are on track to administer their KEAs statewide.

The 13 RTT-ELC States that selected to implement statewide KEAs are at different stages in the process of implementing new or revised assessments. Figure 16 shows the anticipated date of implementation for each State's KEA, as reported in its APR. While three States (**Illinois, Rhode Island,** and **Washington**) are delayed in meeting their 2015-16 planned implementation, others in both Phase 1 and Phase 2 are ahead of the schedule that was outlined in their RTT-ELC Application.

KEA Implementation Timelines in RTT-ELC States

2013-2014 School Year	2014-2015 School Year	2015-2016 School Year	After 2015-2016
• Oregon	• Delaware • Maryland • Ohio	• California • Colorado • Massachusetts • New Mexico • North Carolina	• Illinois • Minnesota • Rhode Island • Washington
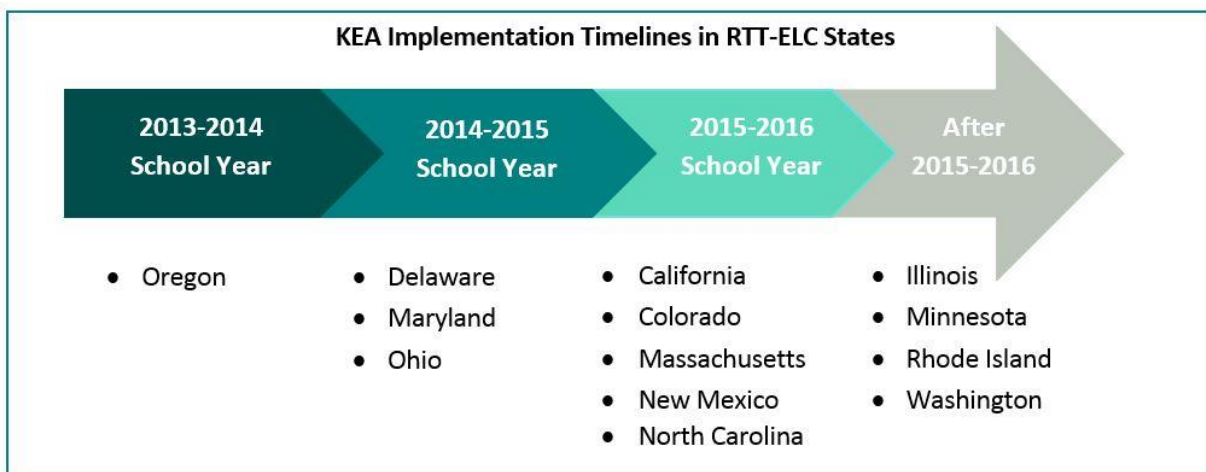
Figure 16. Anticipated Date of Implementation for Each State's KEA

The RTT-ELC States also vary in the tools they are using for their KEA (see figure 17).

WHAT KEA TOOLS ARE RTT-ELC STATES USING?

Adopting or Adapting Commercial Tools

CO: Teaching Strategies GOLD® is on the State-approved list; other commercial KEAs may be added
DE: Adapted version of Teaching Strategies GOLD
KY: Brigance® Kindergarten Screen III
MA: Teaching Strategies GOLD and Work Sampling System® are being piloted
MI: Teaching Strategies GOLD is being piloted but may be replaced by the new Maryland-Ohio KEA
NJ: Teaching Strategies GOLD is being piloted
OR: Adapted version of Child Behavior Rating Scale and easyCBM™
WA: Teaching Strategies GOLD
WI: Phonological Awareness Literacy Screening (PALS)*

Developing or Adapting State Tools

CA: Desired Results Developmental Profile - School Readiness (DRDP-SR©)
GA: Kindergarten Entry Profile for the Georgia Kindergarten Inventory of Developing Skills (GKIDS)
IL: Adapted version of California's DRDP-SR
OH: Using Kindergarten Readiness Assessment - Literacy, a custom-made KEA, but developing a new custom-made KEA with Maryland
MD: Using an adapted version of Work Sampling System, a commercial KEA, but developing a custom-made KEA with Ohio
NM: Working to validate the custom-made Pre-K Observational Assessment for use as the KEA
NC: A K-3 formative assessment that will generate a child profile at kindergarten entry
PA: Kindergarten Entry Inventory (KEI)
VT: Kindergarten Readiness Survey (KRS)

To Be Determined

MN: Six assessment tools are being piloted, including commercial tools and tools developed by other States
RI: Development of the KEA is ongoing, and the State will determine whether to use a commercially made or custom-made KEA

*The PALS is not a comprehensive KEA. It is used for literacy assessment only.

Figure 17. Kindergarten Entry Assessment Tools

Spotlight on States

The following are examples from the 2013 State Annual Performance Reports.

States are collaborating with and learning from one another as they tackle the complexities and challenges of developing and implementing their KEAs.

Illinois and **California** are collaborating to enhance their KEAs. California is adapting its Desired Results Developmental Profile–School Readiness (DRDP-SR©) and Illinois has selected the DRDP-SR© as its assessment tool due to its established validity and reliability. Illinois is making further modifications and extensions to the tool and will conduct additional validity studies of the revised tool.

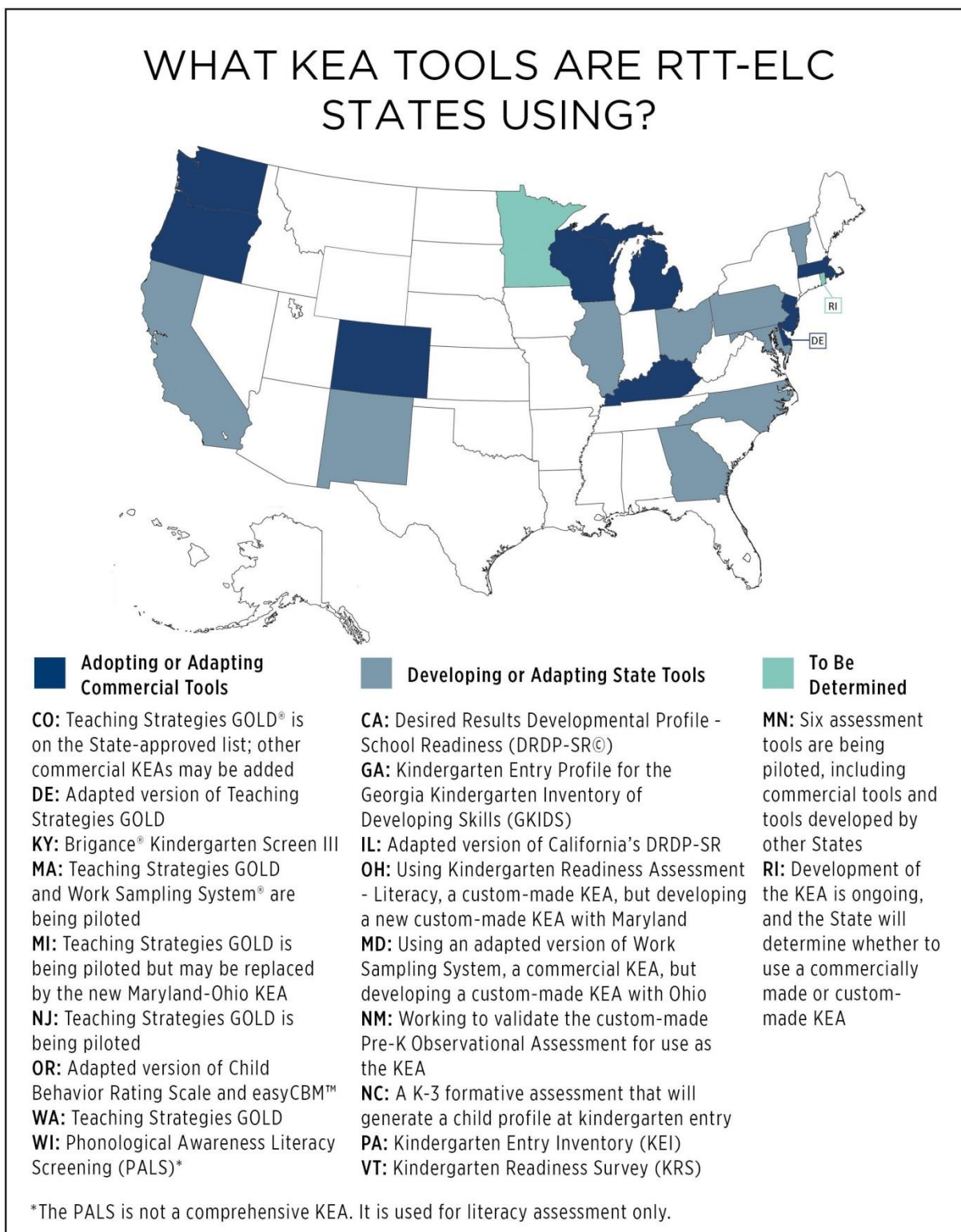In 2013, the U.S. Department of Education awarded Enhanced Assessment Grants (EAG) to support the development and enhancement of KEAs.[xvii] Texas and two State Consortia, one led by **Maryland** and the other led by **North Carolina**, were awarded EAG grants. KEAs under this program should be aligned with State early learning and development standards and cover all essential domains of school readiness. Three additional RTT-ELC grantees are participating in the Maryland consortium (**Massachusetts, Michigan, and Ohio**) and three RTT-ELC grantees are participating in the North Carolina consortium (**Delaware, Oregon,** and **Rhode Island**).

States are acknowledging the importance of involving kindergarten teachers and administrators when planning to implement a KEA.

Massachusetts kindergarten teachers and administrators expressed a need for more professional development to assist them in formative assessment best practices beyond simply learning how to use the Teaching Strategies GOLD® and Work Sampling® assessment tools. To address their needs, the Massachusetts Department of Early Education and Care amended the RTT-ELC budget to include more funding for professional development. To meet the RTT-ELC grant requirements of a statewide KEA, Massachusetts school districts will no longer have the option of choosing between two assessment tools; instead, they will be required to use one tool ensuring continuity of data across the State.

One State, Oregon, fully implemented a statewide KEA in the fall of 2013. It is using the lessons learned to improve the next round of assessments and strengthen data interpretation and reporting.

Oregon has evaluated the 2013–2014 rollout of its KEA and captured the lessons learned in a document that will be used to improve processes for the 2014–2015 assessment rollout. Some areas identified for improvement are the inclusion of kindergarten students attending virtual schools, additional guidance on successful kindergarten assessment practices for Spanish-speaking English language learners, and streamlined mechanisms for data entry and reporting.

IMPROVING DATA SYSTEMS

Corresponds to RTT-ELC Focused Investment Area (E)(2)

Children love the game of "Telephone." They stand in a line, and the first person whispers a secret to the second person, the second person whispers the secret to the third person, and this is repeated down the line, until the last person hears the secret and repeats what he has heard. There is often no similarity between the first message and the last. The message is often unclear. People hear what they expect to hear, and they can't ask for clarification. Through this game, children learn there is a difference between conveying a message and understanding its meaning. They learn that listening takes effort and that good communication is not one-way: it must include talking together, asking and clarifying questions, and checking the results to maintain the integrity of information as it is passed along.

Like in the game of telephone, State agency staff members are finding that they need effective ways to share information across agencies or the end results may not be useful. They need to share data and information in order to answer basic questions that will help them to better support the children they serve. The following hypothetical examples illustrate the types of questions that need to be answered at the program level, at the child level, and at the intersection between different programs and services.

- **At the program level:** Is the Learning Express Center that has a Head Start classroom the same Learning Express Center that has a Level 4 rating in the State TQRIS?

  o How many teachers at this Center have an early childhood certification?
  o Does this Center have a program for children with developmental delays or other types of disabilities or English learners?

The Essential Data Elements

- A unique statewide child identifier or another highly accurate, proven method to link data on that child
- A unique statewide early childhood educator identifier
- A unique program site identifier
- Child and family demographic information, including indicators identifying the criteria that States use to determine whether a child is a child with high needs
- Early childhood educator demographic information, including data on educational attainment and State credential or licenses held, as well as professional development information
- Program-level data on the program's structure, quality, child achievement, suspension and expulsion rates, staff retention, staff compensation, work environment, and all applicable data reported as part of the State's TQRIS
- Child-level program participation and attendance data

Figure 18. The Essential Data Elements as Defined in the RTT-ELC Notice Inviting Applications.

- **At the child level:** Is 4-year-old Tina Adams who was enrolled in the Head Start classroom in the Learning Express Center in 2013 the same Christina J. Adams who is in kindergarten in 2014, even if the addresses are different? And if so, are her vaccinations current?
- **At the intersection between different programs and services:** How many of the 100 preschool-age children in Learning Express Center are considered children with high needs? How prepared were children from the Learning Express Center when they entered kindergarten?

A well-functioning data system can help to answer questions like these and many others. It allows programs to make good programmatic decisions and the State to make good policy decisions based on the data. The results lead to quality improvements in early childhood education, professional development, and services for families.

Within the RTT-ELC framework, States were encouraged to build or enhance early learning data systems that could be used to improve instructional practices, services, and polices. States could do this in one of three ways: 1) build a new early learning data system, 2) enhance their existing Statewide Longitudinal Data System (SLDS), [xviii] or 3) enhance an existing early learning data system and link it to their SLDS.

RTT-ELC early learning data systems should:

- Include all Essential Data Elements[xix] (see figure 18 on the previous page)
- Enable uniform data collection and easy entry of the Essential Data Elements by participating State agencies and participating programs
- Facilitate the exchange of data among participating State agencies by using standard data structures, data formats, and data definitions such as the Common Education Data Standards to ensure interoperability among the various levels and types of data
- Generate information that is timely, relevant, accessible, and easy for early learning and development programs and early childhood educators to use for continuous improvement and decision making and to share with parents and other community stakeholders
- Meet the Data System Oversight Requirements[xx] and comply with the requirements of Federal, State, and local privacy laws.

Policy makers need data and information in order to develop more effective early learning policies. Program administrators need data to identify what is working in their settings and services and make improvements where necessary. Early childhood educators need data to know how the children they serve are doing so that they can improve their practices. And families need information to better take advantage of resources and opportunities available to their children. The data elements needed at all levels of an effective early learning and development system must be coordinated and aligned if they are to be used to improve the instruction, practices, services, and policies that can lead to better outcomes for young children.

Ten RTT-ELC States (**Illinois, Maryland, Massachusetts, Minnesota, New Mexico, North Carolina, Ohio, Oregon, Rhode Island,** and **Wisconsin**) reported on their progress in Focused Investment Area (E)(2), building or enhancing an early learning data system to improve instruction, practices, services, and policies.

Spotlight on States

The following are examples from the 2013 State Annual Performance Reports.

RTT-ELC States who chose this area of focus are making progress in building new data systems or enhancing existing early learning data systems.

States are working on establishing data systems in different ways. Some RTT-ELC States are building integrated data systems that include early childhood data and others are integrating data that are housed in existing systems. States are working to include each of the essential data elements that are needed to build a comprehensive integrated early childhood data system.

Some RTT-ELC States are expanding their SLDS to include data on young children.

> **New Mexico** has initiated strategies to include all of the Essential Data Elements by extending its existing SLDS, the Student Teacher Accountability Reporting System (STARS), the foundation for the RTT-ELC data system. The pre-kindergarten to age 20/workforce database is built on STARS through a Memorandum of Understanding between the Public Education Department; the Department of Health; and the Children, Youth and Families Department. According to the 2013 Data Quality Campaign Report, New Mexico now includes six of the seven Essential Data Elements, up from three in 2011.

> The **Ohio** Department of Education is currently working with the Ohio Board of Regents to build and deploy a SLDS. This P-20 (preschool to age 20) Repository will house nine groups of data. At the time of reporting, three sets of data had been loaded, including key data elements from Higher Education Institutions, Ohio Department of Education (ODE) educator data, and general organizational data from the ODE databases.

A truly comprehensive early learning data system must include data from all the systems that touch young children's lives.

> **North Carolina's** Early Childhood Integrated Data System (ECIDS) is a multiagency collaborative project for building a data system that integrates high-quality education, health, and social service information from participating State agencies to better inform early childhood policies and programs that ultimately support better outcomes for children and families. The ECIDS will link to North Carolina's P-20W (pre-kindergarten to age 20/workforce) longitudinal education data system. ECIDS leadership and staff defined a data governance structure, gathered stakeholder input, developed business and technology requirements for the system, developed plans for implementing a unique child identifier for use in participating programs, and continued to generate a collaborative understanding and commitment to the project among many agency leaders, staff, and participants.

> **Maryland** has chosen to integrate existing data systems into its SLDS and is making great strides by building an Early Childhood Data Warehouse (ECDW) as an integral component of the State's SLDS. In this data warehouse, Maryland is connecting databases that house a variety of information; e.g., child care data, including provider data; licensing inspections, credentialing and child care subsidy program data; kindergarten assessment data and enrollment data; data on infants, toddlers, and

preschoolers who receive special education services; data on children enrolled in mental health and nutrition programs; and data on child immunizations, health screenings, foster care, and child adoption. The State went beyond simply linking and coordinating these data systems and is actively trying to resolve potential data duplication across systems. Maryland's original Child Enrollment and Attendance Record System (EARS) application was enhanced and moved to the Child Care Automated Tracking System (CCATS) environment so that it could be fully integrated with the rest of the CCATS database. This decision will avoid data duplication and minimize data integrity risks that could occur if data are being captured differently in two different systems.

ENGAGING AND SUPPORTING FAMILIES

Corresponds to RTT-ELC Focused Investment Area (C)(4)

Most young children assume they are the center of the universe. The first circle that revolves around children is their family. The family provides love and security and helps the child make sense of the larger world. Engaging families in meaningful ways in their children's early learning experiences is critical to helping children reach their potential.

Five RTT-ELC States (**Maryland, Massachusetts, North Carolina, Washington,** and **Wisconsin**) chose to direct some of their RTT-ELC resources to engage and support families in promoting their children's development and learning under Focused Investment Area (C)(4). Although some States did not address this specific focused investment area, many States are working on aspects of family engagement through other areas of their RTT-ELC plans. These five States reported their progress in the following areas: establishing standards for family engagement, helping parents and families support their children's development, proving early childhood educators with family engagement strategies, and promoting family support and engagement statewide (see figure 19 on the next page).
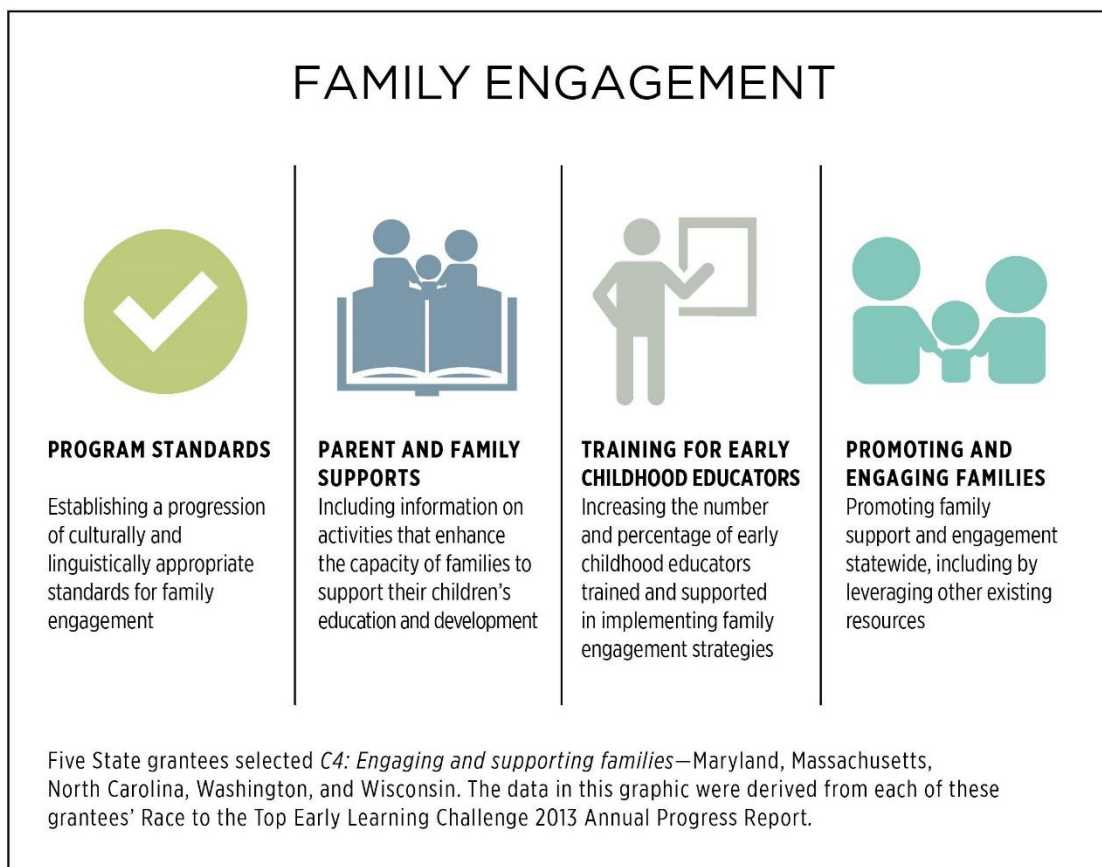
FAMILY ENGAGEMENT

PROGRAM STANDARDS

Establishing a progression of culturally and linguistically appropriate standards for family engagement

PARENT AND FAMILY SUPPORTS

Including information on activities that enhance the capacity of families to support their children's education and development

TRAINING FOR EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATORS

Increasing the number and percentage of early childhood educators trained and supported in implementing family engagement strategies

PROMOTING AND ENGAGING FAMILIES

Promoting family support and engagement statewide, including by leveraging other existing resources

Five State grantees selected *C4: Engaging and supporting families*—Maryland, Massachusetts, North Carolina, Washington, and Wisconsin. The data in this graphic were derived from each of these grantees' Race to the Top Early Learning Challenge 2013 Annual Progress Report.

Figure 19. Engaging and Supporting Families in Promoting Their Children's Development and Learning.

Spotlight on States

The following are examples from the 2013 State Annual Performance Reports.

The five RTT-ELC States that chose this area of focus are making resources available to families and early childhood educators.

Families with young children need easier access to information about early learning and program quality in their States. RTT-ELC States are making significant progress in giving parents the information and tools they need to make informed decisions and support their children's early learning.

> **Washington** created a two-month-long public awareness campaign with parenting tips and information about events for families. Thrive by Five Washington worked with the public relations firm Edelman Seattle and its media partner Media Plus+ to generate awareness for the "Love. Talk. Play." campaign. The goals of the campaign were to:

- celebrate parents as their children's first and most important teachers;
- draw more attention to the campaign and message and continually increase the number of parents receiving a weekly tip email and following on Facebook, where tips are also posted; and
- highlight campaign work and events happening in the 10 Washington Early Learning Regional Coalitions.

RTT-ELC States are training early childhood educators to support families.

RTT-ELC States are collaborating with partners from across the early learning sectors to reaching families with young children, especially families of children with high needs.

> The **North Carolina** Head Start State Collaboration Office is engaged in a statewide family engagement training/coaching initiative. This will build the capacities of early childhood educators in a range of settings (including private child care, local educational agencies, religious-sponsored child care, and military child care) to work with the families to support their children's development. This initiative leverages the expertise of high-quality Head Start programs in the State to lead the training/coaching efforts. Twenty-two Head Start hubs provide training on family engagement strategies, technical assistance, demonstration and coaching, and follow-up as needed to the early childhood workforce.

In addition to establishing activities to engage families, one State is also focused on building internal capacity for family engagement by hiring a full-time family engagement analyst.

> **Wisconsin's** family engagement analyst recruited a broad stakeholder workgroup to provide key input to ensure quality and depth in Wisconsin's family engagement work. For instance, the work group will assist in ensuring that the family engagement standards of YoungStar (the State's TQRIS) align with other similar standards that affect early childhood providers such as the Head Start Parent, Family, Community Engagement Framework and the Strengthening Families Framework.

While only five States chose to allocate RTT-ELC funds to family engagement as a focused investment area of their grant, other States are developing and implementing many exciting initiatives and tools related to their TQRIS that are designed to engage, support, and inform families.

> The **Delaware** Office of Early Learning joined with families and key partners in Delaware's early learning and development system to create and launch a new website, Great Starts Delaware, to support families with young children. The website promotes the importance of early learning for young children (birth to age 5). It encourages families to use Delaware Stars, the state's TQRIS, as a guide when they look for early learning programs for their children. A search function is incorporated in the site and is specially designed to work on smartphones. A contest with family prizes, funded by a private foundation partner, boosted interest in the site. The Delaware Office of Early Learning also use Facebook and Twitter. The new Early Learning at Home tab is updated at least twice each month with low and no-cost infant, toddler, and preschool activities for families.

PROMOTING CHILDREN'S HEALTHY DEVELOPMENT

Corresponds to RTT-ELC Focused Investment Area (C)(3)

Children's health and learning are intertwined. Children who are hungry or ill have more difficulty focusing. They miss out on opportunities to learn from the adults in their environment and from their peers. By promoting healthy development, States can help to ensure that all children, especially children with high needs, get the most out of their high-quality early learning and development experiences and enter school ready to succeed.

Five States (**California, Delaware, Maryland, North Carolina,** and **Oregon**) chose to address the Focused Investment Area (C)(3), identifying and addressing the health, behavioral, and developmental needs of children with high needs. Although some States did not address this specific focused investment area, many States are working on aspects of health promotions through other areas of their RTT-ELC plans. The five States reported in their APR about their progress promoting children's health in six areas: standards, screening and referral, promoting child development, training educators, healthy children, and leveraging resources (see figure 20 on the next page).

CHILD HEALTH & DEVELOPMENT

STANDARDS
Establishing standards for health and safety

SCREENING AND REFERRAL
Promoting screening, referral, follow-up treatment, and well child care

PROMOTING CHILD DEVELOPMENT
Promoting healthy development across TQRIS program standards

TRAINING EDUCATORS
Increasing the number of educators trained and supported in State health standards

HEALTHY KIDS
Promoting healthy eating and physical activity in early learning settings

LEVERAGING RESOURCES
Leveraging resources to meet ambitious targets

Five State grantees selected *C3: Identifying and addressing the health, behavioral, and developmental needs of Children with High Needs to improve school readiness*—California, Delaware, Maryland, North Carolina, and Oregon. The data in this graphic were derived from each of these grantees' Race to the Top Early Learning Challenge 2013 Annual Progress Report.

Figure 20. Promoting Children's Health and Development

Spotlight on States

The following are examples from the 2013 State Annual Performance Reports.

All five RTT-ELC States that chose to focus on this area reported making progress in promoting young children's healthy development.

RTT-ELC States have leveraged other grant funds to support collaborative work.

> **California** received a Federal Early Childhood Comprehensive Systems (ECCS) grant in 2013 which allowed California to continue to build on existing cross-agency system-change efforts and strengthen partnerships among the California Home Visiting Program, RTT-ELC, First 5 California, the First 5 Association, and the Office for Child Abuse and Prevention. This collaboration will help California with the following goals related to promoting children's health:
>
> (1) Strengthen screening and referral mechanisms so families are connected to services quickly;
> (2) Mitigate the adverse effects of toxic stress by promoting the development, implementation, and reimbursement of treatment interventions that are innovative, practical, and preventative; and

(3) Help California's early childhood workforce understand the importance of early brain development, the impact of toxic stress on development, and the critical need to support child and family resiliency.

RTT-ELC States are working with medical professionals to include developmental screening in well-child visits.

> The **North Carolina** Partnership for Children continued efforts to expand its Assuring Better Child Health and Development (ABCD) model. ABCD works to increase health and developmental screening and referral rates for all young children within a medical home model of care delivery[xxi] by integrating routine developmental screening into well-child visits. Medical professionals are taught to use the Modified Checklist for Autism in Toddlers along with other screening tools. In 2013, the North Carolina Partnership for Children worked with local partnerships to expand services and increase ABCD coverage to additional counties. Local partnerships were selected to lead the planning and implementation efforts in all other North Carolina regions. Ten regions will be implementing ABCD in 2014. The remaining four regions will complete planning for implementation in 2015.

Having staff who work directly at the community level can be an important tool in promoting children's health. These individuals can reach families early, before problems develop.

> **Delaware** hired community health workers, called Health Ambassadors, to conduct outreach in areas of high need across the State. One successful strategy was hosting community baby showers. These provided opportunities to educate families who are expecting or who have young children and to link them with needed health services and supports.

RTT-ELC requires States to ensure that the statewide TQRIS includes standards that address various aspects of children's health and development, including nutrition and physical activity.

> **Maryland** revised its EXCELS TQRIS to include sections that address Developmentally Appropriate Learning and Practice and Administrative Policies and Practices. These sections promote children's physical, social, and emotional development throughout the progression of levels. Program standards include new requirements related to nutrition, such as serving fresh fruits, vegetables, and whole grains and limiting fat, sugar, and salt in foods served by the program. The new standards also require programs to incorporate information from the child's Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP) or Individualized Education Program (IEP), when available, for individual planning related to the child's health, physical and social development, and activities.

Some States are carefully considering and building on the momentum of changing policies and practices within their States as they implement their RTT-ELC plans.

> Over the past several years, **Oregon** has undergone significant health care reform, including substantial expansion in children's insurance coverage and the creation of a new Medicaid delivery system based on the coordinated care model. The State is using the RTT-ELC grant to speed up this progress. Increasing access to a medical home model of care and monitoring access to medical care have become priorities in Oregon's health care reform efforts, and measurement of these domains is being followed closely statewide. Oregon plans to compare its statewide monitoring of health care utilization with National Survey of Children's Health results as a benchmark for their progress.

FINAL THOUGHTS

"The Administration is committed to helping parents find the highest quality care for their children, and providing early learning providers with the tools they need to improve the quality of care they offer."

— U.S. Secretary of Health and Human Services Sylvia Burwell

The Race to the Top – Early Learning Challenge Program represents an unprecedented opportunity for States to focus deeply on their birth through age 5 early learning and development systems. It provides a platform for States to build a more unified approach to supporting young children and their families. An effective integrated system can increase quality in early learning and development programs and boost access to these programs for children with high needs. Improved quality and access will help children enter kindergarten with the necessary knowledge and skills to succeed in school, and ultimately, as adults.

The RTT-ELC framework has five key elements:

- Successful State Systems
- High-Quality, Accountable Programs
- Promoting Early Learning and Development Outcomes for Children
- A Great Early Childhood Education Workforce
- Measuring Outcomes and Progress

This framework has given States a comprehensive approach to better coordinate, implement, and evaluate high-quality early learning and development programs. The results of these efforts will provide families with the information and support they need to encourage their children's development and learning and to select the best program for their children—the program that will give them the best chance for entering kindergarten ready to succeed.

Just as quality early learning and development programs can be game changers in the lives of young children, RTT-ELC can be a system changer for States. Through RTT-ELC, States have the opportunity to approach complicated issues in a thoughtful, coordinated way. They have additional funding and technical assistance to bring varied State agencies and other partners together to find innovative policy and procedural solutions to complex questions such as these:

- How can we encourage families to choose high-quality early learning and development programs for their children, especially those with high needs?

- How can we help early learning and development programs improve their quality?
- How can we better define and communicate what an early childhood professional should know and be able to do? How do we support practitioners so they are successful in teaching young children?

Collaboration and coordination at a systems level is not a new concept. State policy makers have long recognized the advantages of working together. They respect the fact that they are striving for a common vision for the children in their State and that each program has a unique contribution to realizing that vision. Collaboration requires a commitment of time, energy, and resources. It takes planning that will survive the tenure of individual leaders. The results are worth the effort, but States often lack the time, space, language, and resources to create solutions on a systems level.

RTT-ELC is the first Federal initiative to infuse funds and other resources into enhancing early learning and development systems that cut across various state agencies.

The 14 Phase 1 and Phase 2 RTT-ELC States are making progress in multiple components of the RTT-ELC framework, and yet there is clearly more work to be done. In the coming years, States will be focusing on supporting programs to improve their quality and reach higher level tiers in their State TQRIS, bringing more State-funded preschool programs and IDEA-funded programs for children with disabilities into the TQRIS, and continuing to improve the quality of the data they are collecting and reporting in their APRs. States will be expected to continue the successful collaborations they have established and to build new collaboration opportunities through other Federally funded programs — such as the Enhanced Assessment Grants, the State Longitudinal Data Systems grants, the Preschool Development Grants, and the Early Head Start-child care partnerships — to leverage their RTT-ELC funds, further enhance their early learning and development systems, and plan for sustaining the effects of the work they have begun under RTT-ELC. In addition, six more States received RTT-ELC grants in 2014, and the initiatives they undertake will add to the knowledge base for improving early learning and development systems throughout the nation.

Appendix A: State-Level APR Data Tables:

Increasing the number of early learning and development programs in the top tiers of the TQRIS.
(Corresponds with RTT-ELC Performance Measure (B)(4)(c)(1))

Table 1: Number of Early Learning and Development Programs in All Tiers of the TQRIS				
	State	**Baseline**	**2012**	**2013**	**Change Baseline to 2013**
Phase 1 Grantees	California	49	475	1,042	993
	Delaware	134	322	435	301
	Maryland	71	333	1,579	1,508
	Massachusetts	1,345	4,489	4,410	3,065
	Minnesota	1,405	3,996	6,630	5,225
	North Carolina[1]	8,101	7,614	7,251	-850
	Ohio	1,074	1,200	1,432	358
	Rhode Island	93	175	786	693
	Washington[2]	7,406	7,406	7,406	0
	Total Phase 1 Grantees (n=9)	**19,678**	**26,010**	**30,971**	**11,293**

	State	**Baseline**	**2013**	**Change Baseline to 2013**
Phase 2 Grantees	Colorado[3]	473	465	-8
	Illinois[4]	778	12,734	11,956
	New Mexico[5]	1,027	1,027	0
	Oregon[6]	4,468	4,367	-101
	Wisconsin[7]	4,897	4,593	-304
	Total Phase 2 Grantees (n=5)	**11,643**	**23,186**	**11,543**

Grand Total	**# of Programs at Baseline**	**# Programs in 2013**	**Change**
Phase 1 and 2 Combined	**31,321**	**54,157**	**22,836**

Source: 2013 Annual Performance Reports by 14 RTT-ELC States: Performance Measure B(4)(c)(1).

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[1] In 2013, the total number of regulated programs decreased in North Carolina so the number of programs eligible to be in the States' TQRIS decreased. North Carolina is already reporting a high level of program participation in the TQRIS since the TQRIS is tied to State licensing requirements. (*North Carolina APR, pp. 23-24*)

[2] Washington reported the total number of sites that are eligible to participate in the TQRIS. This includes active licensed child care centers and family care centers, Early Child Education and Development Assistance Program (ECEAP), and Head Start programs. (*Washington APR pp. 28-31*)

[3] In Colorado, the number of rated programs has remained relatively flat as it transitions from its current QRIS to its new TQRIS. (*Colorado APR, pp. 30-31*)

[4] Illinois' baseline numbers were estimated. Data collection is improving as the system matures. (*Illinois APR, pp. 23-24*)

[5] New Mexico's data represent the population of providers enrolled in its QRIS in August 2012. New Mexico will be transitioning these providers to a new five tiered program, called FOCUS-TQRIS. Data will be tracked through an integrated database. (*New Mexico APR, pp. 22-23*)

[6] Oregon began field testing its TQRIS in four regions in 2013. It has created the pipeline for early learning and development programs to submit their portfolio for a star rating. Complete data are not yet available. (*Oregon APR, pp. 22-23*)

[7] Wisconsin's TQRIS, YoungStar, is being rolled out in phases for different types of care. Wisconsin saw a decrease in the overall number of child care providers throughout 2013, due in part to rigorous YoungStar requirements, changing demographics, and reduction in workforce participation rates. (*Wisconsin APR, p. 25*)

Table 2: Number of Programs in the Top 2 Tiers[8] of the TQRIS				
	State	**Baseline**	**2012**	**2013**	**Change Baseline to 2013**

<table>
<tr><th rowspan="11">Phase 1 Grantees</th><th>State</th><th>Baseline</th><th>2012</th><th>2013</th><th>Change Baseline to 2013</th></tr>
<tr><td>California</td><td>7</td><td>8</td><td>279</td><td>272</td></tr>
<tr><td>Delaware</td><td>23</td><td>75</td><td>129</td><td>106</td></tr>
<tr><td>Maryland</td><td>25</td><td>17</td><td>108</td><td>83</td></tr>
<tr><td>Massachusetts</td><td>93</td><td>179</td><td>348</td><td>255</td></tr>
<tr><td>Minnesota</td><td>365</td><td>483</td><td>1,119</td><td>754</td></tr>
<tr><td>North Carolina</td><td>3,813</td><td>4,012</td><td>4,118</td><td>305</td></tr>
<tr><td>Ohio[9]</td><td>0</td><td>0</td><td>311</td><td>311</td></tr>
<tr><td>Rhode Island</td><td>22</td><td>35</td><td>42</td><td>20</td></tr>
<tr><td>Washington[10]</td><td>115</td><td>0</td><td>55</td><td>-60</td></tr>
<tr><td>Total Phase 1 Grantees (n=9)</td><td>4,463</td><td>4,809</td><td>6,509</td><td>2,046</td></tr>
</table>

<table>
<tr><th rowspan="7">Phase 2 Grantees</th><th>State</th><th>Baseline</th><th>2013</th><th>Change Baseline to 2013</th></tr>
<tr><td>Colorado</td><td>109</td><td>101</td><td>-8</td></tr>
<tr><td>Illinois[11]</td><td></td><td>951</td><td>951</td></tr>
<tr><td>New Mexico</td><td>142</td><td>134</td><td>-8</td></tr>
<tr><td>Oregon[12]</td><td>-</td><td>3</td><td>3</td></tr>
<tr><td>Wisconsin</td><td>397</td><td>516</td><td>119</td></tr>
<tr><td>Total Phase 2 Grantees (n=5)</td><td>1,115</td><td>1,705</td><td>590</td></tr>
</table>

Grand Total **Phase 1 and 2 Combined**	**# of Programs at Baseline** 5,578	**# Programs in 2013** 8,214	**Change** 2,636

Source: 2013 Annual Performance Reports by 14 RTT-ELC States: Performance Measure B(4)(c)(1).

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[8] Eight States use five tiers or levels, so their data reflect the number of programs in tiers 4 and 5. Three States have 4 tiers, so their data reflect the number of programs in tiers 3 and 4. Two States (Colorado and Illinois) are transition from four to five tiers, so their data reflect the number of programs in tiers 3 and 4. Ohio is transitioning from three to five tiers, but in 2013 it had no programs in tier 5, so Ohio's data are the number of programs in tiers 3 and 4. *(Colorado APR, pp. 30-31; Illinois APR, pp. 23-24; Ohio APR, p. 24)*

[9] On October 1, 2013, Ohio implemented revisions to its TQRIS, moving from a three to a five star system. Due to the transition, there were approximately five months when programs were not able to initially register or to request an increased rating. (*Ohio APR, p 24*)

[10] Washington reported decreases in the overall number of programs in the State, reducing the number of programs eligible to participate in the State's TQRIS. The process of building its HS/ECEAP online enrollment system delayed participation until October 2013. Also, some HS/ECEAP sites are participating in the higher levels of Early Achievers, but are being counted in other categories. *(Washington APR pp. 28-31)*

[11] Illinois introduced a new requirement for their highest Tier that was not available for providers to complete in the reporting year. *(Illinois APR, pp. 23-24)*

[12] Oregon is in the field-testing phase of its TQRIS in four regions of the State in 2013. It has created the pipeline for Early Learning and Development Programs to submit their portfolio for a star rating. Complete data are not yet available. *(Oregon APR, pp. 22-23)*

APPENDIX B: STATE-LEVEL APR DATA TABLES:

Increasing the number of children with high needs in programs that are in the top tiers of the TQRIS. (Corresponds with Performance Measure (B)(4)(c)(2))

	State	Baseline	2012	2013	Change from Baseline to 2013
	Table 3: Number of Children with High Needs Served by State-Funded Preschool Programs in the Top Tiers of the TQRIS				
Phase 1 Grantees	California	836	6,409	20,357	19,521
	Delaware	72	500	658	586
	Maryland[13]	4,308	5,844	3,456	-852
	Massachusetts	-	148	1,579	1,579
	Minnesota	2,857	7,401	21,489	18,632
	North Carolina	18,568	23,632	25,553	6,985
	Ohio[14]	-	-	-	-
	Rhode Island[15]	69	-	73	4
	Washington	1,936	4,014	4,747	2811
	Total Phase 1 Grantees (n=9)	**28,646**	**47,948**	**77,912**	**49,266**

	State	Baseline	2013	Change from Baseline to 2013
Phase 2 Grantees	Colorado[16]	6,623	6,249	-374
	Illinois[17]	-	16,934	16,934
	New Mexico[18]	1,463	-	-
	Oregon[19]	-	-	-
	Wisconsin[20]	-	-	-
	Total Phase 2 Grantees (n=5)	**8,086**	**23,183**	**16,560**

Grand Total Phase 1 and 2 Combined	# of Children at Baseline	# Children in 2013	Change
	36,732	101,095	64,363

Source: 2013 Annual Performance Reports by 14 RTT-ELC States: Performance Measure B(4)(c)(2).

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[13] Maryland is developing strategies of how to incentivize the participation of State-funded preschool programs. All activities will be conducted in years 3 and 4 of the RTT-ELC grant. (*Maryland APR, pp. 20-21*)

[14] Ohio publicly funded preschool programs, licensed by the Ohio Department of Education, were registered and began the process to be rated during the 2013-2014 school year. (*Ohio APR, pp. 25-27*)

[15] Rhode Island was focused on the alignment efforts and entry level participation in 2013. In 2014, the focus will be on moving programs to higher tiers. (*Rhode Island APR, pp. 26-28*)

[16] Colorado Preschool Program data only includes sites that allow Qualistar Colorado to release their rating information. Program data, including ratings information, are self-verified. (*Colorado, APR, pp. 32-34*)

[17] Illinois encountered delays in implementing a data transfer process for enrolling school-based programs. Based on a programmatic decision, far fewer Chicago sites were included than anticipated. (*Illinois APR, pp. 25-26*)

[18] New Mexico is in the process of transitioning their existing AIM High QRIS to the new TQRIS FOCUS for preschool programs. (*New Mexico APR, pp. 23-24*)

[19] Oregon launched the TQRIS in four regions of the State in 2013, which is why baseline participation is zero for 2012. (*Oregon APR, pp. 24-26*)

[20] Wisconsin does not currently have a method for tracking this number. It provides an estimate for "all regulated programs" in an 'Other' category. More exact data will be collected with completion of its early childhood longitudinal data system. (*Wisconsin APR, pp. 26-27*)

Table 4: Number of Children with High Needs Served by CCDF-Funded Programs in the Top Tiers of the TQRIS				
State	**Baseline**	**2012**	**2013**	**Change from Baseline to 2013**
California	530	12,033	12,045	11,515
Delaware	446	1,113	1,927	1,481
Maryland	13,153	7,966	37,113	23,960
Massachusetts	145	-	544	399
Minnesota	4,049	2,395	5,150	1,101
North Carolina[21]	60,178	51,433	48,367	-11,811
Ohio	7,369	9,947	11,027	3,658
Rhode Island	244	563	576	332
Washington	108	11,189	11,118	11,010
Total Phase 1 Grantees (n=9)	**86,222**	**96,639**	**127,867**	**41,645**

Phase 1 Grantees

State	**Baseline**	**2013**	**Change from Baseline to 2013**
Colorado[22]	-	-	-
Illinois	15,059	18,420	3,361
New Mexico	5,202	5,844	642
Oregon[23]	-	48	48
Wisconsin	6,219	8,432	2,213
Total Phase 2 Grantees (n=5)	**26,480**	**32,744**	**6,264**

Phase 2 Grantees

Grand Total Phase 1 and 2 Combined	**# of Children at Baseline** 112,702	**# Children in 2013** 160,611	**Change** 47,909

Source: 2013 Annual Performance Reports by 14 RTT-ELC States: Performance Measure B(4)(c)(2).

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[21] North Carolina's total number of CCDF-Funded programs decreased in both 2011 and 2012. Despite the decrease in total programs, it exceeded its target of 76 percent of children in CCDF-funded programs in the top tiers of the State's TQRIS. *(North Carolina APR pp. 25-27)*

[22] Colorado's current data collection methods do not allow for reporting the specificity of data for children with high needs enrolled in CCDF-funded programs. *(Colorado APR, pp. 32-34)*

[23] Oregon launched the TQRIS in four regions of the State in 2013, which is why baseline participation is listed as zero for 2012 for all program types. *(Oregon, APR, pp. 24-26)*

Table 5: Number of Children with High Needs Served by Early Head Start/Head Start in the Top Tiers of the TQRIS				
	State	**Baseline**	**2012**	**2013**	**Change from Baseline to 2013**

Phase 1 Grantees	State	Baseline	2012	2013	Change from Baseline to 2013
	California	208	2,704	11,564	11,356
	Delaware	227	2,481	2,613	2,386
	Massachusetts	9,614	10,770	16,086	6,472
	Maryland	48	567	605	557
	Minnesota	3,397	11,163	11,747	8,350
	North Carolina	22,348	22,348	22,972	624
	Ohio	4,711	11,474	18,974	14,263
	Rhode Island	515	687	759	244
	Washington	3,401	7,175	6,371	2,970
	Total Phase 1 Grantees (n=9)	**44,469**	**69,369**	**91,691**	**47,222**

Phase 2 Grantees	State	Baseline	2013	Change from Baseline to 2013
	Colorado[24]	5,519	2,135	-3,384
	Illinois[25]	-	2,257	2,257
	New Mexico[26]	3,842	3,662	-180
	Oregon[27]	-	-	-
	Wisconsin	2,432	2,983	551
	Total Phase 2 Grantees (n=5)	**11,793**	**11,037**	**-756**

Grand Total Phase 1 and 2 Combined	**# of Children at Baseline** **56,262**	**# Children in 2013** **102,728**	**Change** **46,466**

Source: 2013 Annual Performance Reports by 14 RTT-ELC States: Performance Measure B(4)(c)(2).

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[24] Colorado experienced data issues with Early Head Start and Head Start data including missing and mismatched license numbers in tracking 2013 rated program facilities for Year One reporting and duplicated counts in baseline data. Colorado will investigate including program type as a data field captured in the new TQRIS to have a single source of reference for quality rating participation that can address accuracy and prevent duplicate counts. *(Colorado APR, pp. 32-34)*

[25] Illinois encountered delays in developing a process for including Head Start and Early Head Start programs in the State's TQRIS, ExceleRate Illinois. *(Illinois APR, pp. 25-26)*

[26] New Mexico Head Start data was adjusted to reflect changes in enrollment of children with high needs due to sequestration. *(New Mexico, APR, pp. 23-24)*

[27] Oregon launched the TQRIS in four regions of the State in 2013, which is why baseline participation is listed as zero for 2012 for all program types. Many Head Start programs are exempt from State licensing but are interested in becoming licensed and applying for a star rating. *(Oregon, APR, pp. 24-26)*

ENDNOTES

[i] For information about the benefits of high-quality early learning opportunities for children from low-income families, see Duncan, Greg J. and Robert J. Murnane. *Restoring Opportunity: The Crisis of Inequality and the Challenge for American Education*. Boston: Harvard Education Press, 2014. Additional information including Video about Boston Public Schools PreK program and related infographics is at http://restoringopportunity.com/. Also see Forry, Nicole, Elizabeth E. Davis, and Kate Welti. "Ready or not: Associations Between Participation in Subsidized Child Care Arrangements, Pre-Kindergarten, and Head Start and Children's School Readiness." *Early Childhood Research Quarterly* 28 (2013): 634-644.

[ii] For research about the lasting effects of high-quality early learning experiences, see Camilli, Gregori, Sadako Vargas, Sharon Ryan, and W. Steven Barnett. "Meta-Analysis of the Effects of Early Education Interventions on Cognitive and Social Development," *Teachers College Record*, 112 (2010): 579–620. http://rci.rutgers.edu/~camilli/Papers/38_15440.pdf. Reynolds, Arthur J., Judy A. Temple, Suh-Ruu Ou, Irma A. Arteaga, and Barry A. B. White. "School-Based Early Childhood Education and Age-28 Well-Being: Effects by Timing, Dosage, and Subgroups," *Science*, 33 (2011): 360-364. http://www.sciencemag.org/content/333/6040/360. Princiotta, Dan, and Kristin Denton Flanagan. *Fifth Grade: Findings From The Fifth-Grade Follow-up of the Early Childhood Longitudinal Study, Kindergarten Class of 1998–99 (ECLS–K). (NCES 2006–038).* U.S. Department of Education, 2006. http://nces.ed.gov/pubs2006/2006038.pdf. Halle, Tamara, Nicole Forry, Elizabeth Hair, Kate Perper, Laura Wandner, Julia Wessel, and Jessica Vick. *Disparities in Early Learning and Development: Lessons from the Early Childhood Longitudinal Study—Birth Cohort (ECLS–B).* Child Trends, 2009. http://www.childtrends.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/05/2009-52DisparitiesELExecSumm.pdf

[iii] The definition of Children with High-Needs is from the RTT-ELC Notices Inviting Applications and is identical across the three ELC Phases. See 2011 RTT-ELC Notice Inviting Applications, 76 FR 5356, 53568 (Aug. 26, 2011). http://www.federalregister.gov/a/2011-21756/p-110

[iv] See §1832(b)(1), title VIII, Division B of P.L. 112-10, the Department of Defense and Full-Year Continuing Appropriations Act, 2011 . http://www.acf.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/ecd/rtt_elc_legislation.pdf.

[v] For more information about the three phases of RTT-ELC, see the RTT-ELC website at http://www2.ed.gov/programs/racetothetop-earlylearningchallenge/applicant.html, which contains links to materials related to the three phases.

[vi] Information about the Federal Poverty Threshold for a family of four in 2012 was obtained from Office of the Assistant Secretary for Planning and Evaluation (ASPE), U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. http://aspe.hhs.gov/poverty/12poverty.shtml

[vii] The federal poverty definition consists of a series of thresholds based on family size and composition. In 2012, a 200 percent poverty threshold for a family of two adults and two children was $46,566. Poverty status is not determined for people in military barracks, institutional quarters, or for unrelated individuals under age 15 (such as foster children). The data are based on income received in the 12 months prior to the survey. Represents data year 2012, American Community Survey (ACS). Indicator data for "Child Population by Single Age" and "Children Ages 0 to 8 Below 200 Percent Poverty," Kids Count Data Center. Accessed October 31, 2014, http://datacenter.kidscount.org

[viii] The RTT-ELC framework was first established in the 2011 Notice Inviting Applications for RTT-ELC, 76 FR 53564 (Aug. 26, 2011).

[ix] See RTT-ELC Absolute Priority, 2011 RTT-ELC Notice Inviting Applications at 53566. http://www.federalregister.gov/a/2011-21756/p-40

[x] For information about the requirement to spend 4 percent of CCDF funds on quality initiatives, see U.S. Department

of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families, Child Care Bureau. "Section 658G. Activities to Improve the Quality of Child Care." *Sec. 658. Child Care and Development Block Grant Act of 1990.* 1996. http://www.acf.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/occ/ccdbgact.pdf

xi Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System means the system through which the State uses a set of progressively higher Program Standards to evaluate the quality of an Early Learning and Development Program and to support program improvement. A Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System consists of four components: (a) Tiered Program Standards with multiple rating categories that clearly and meaningfully differentiate program quality levels; (b) monitoring to evaluate program quality based on the Program Standards; (c) supports to help programs meet progressively higher standards (e.g., through training, technical assistance, financial support); and (d) program quality ratings that are publically available; and includes a process for validating the system. This definition is from the RTT-ELC Notices Inviting Applications and is identical across the three ELC Phases. See 2011 RTT-ELC Notice Inviting Applications at 53570. http://www.federalregister.gov/a/2011-21756/p-181

xii The definition of Common Education Data Standards is from the RTT-ELC Notice Inviting Applications and is identical across the three ELC Phases. See 2011 RTT-ELC Notice Inviting Applications at 53571. http://www.federalregister.gov/a/2011-21756/p-111

xiii Workforce Knowledge and Competency Framework means a set of expectations that describes what Early Childhood Educators (including those working with children with disabilities and English learners) should know and be able to do. The Workforce Knowledge and Competency Framework, at a minimum, (a) is evidence-based; (b) incorporates knowledge and application of the State's Early Learning and Development Standards, the Comprehensive Assessment Systems, child development, health, and culturally and linguistically appropriate strategies for working with families; (c) includes knowledge of early mathematics and literacy development and effective instructional practices to support mathematics and literacy development in young children; (d) incorporates effective use of data to guide instruction and program improvement; (e) includes effective behavior management strategies that promote positive social emotional development and reduce challenging behaviors; and (f) incorporates feedback from experts at the State's postsecondary institutions and other early learning and development experts and Early Childhood Educators. This definition is from the RTT-ELC Notices Inviting Applications and is identical across the three ELC Phases. See 2011 RTT-ELC Notice Inviting Applications at 53571. http://www.federalregister.gov/a/2011-21756/p-182

xiv The definition of Essential Domains of School Readiness is from the RTT-ELC Notice Inviting Applications and is identical across the three ELC Phases. See 2011 RTT-ELC Notice Inviting Applications at 53571. http://www.federalregister.gov/a/2011-21756/p-138

xv National Research Council. *Early Childhood Assessment: Why, What, and How.* Committee on Developmental Outcomes and Assessments for Young Children, C.E. Snow and S.B. Van Hemel, Editors. Board on Children, Youth, and Families, Board on Testing and Assessment, Division of Behavioral and Social Sciences and Education. The National Academies Press, 2008. www.nap.edu/catalog.php?record_id=12446.

xvi The definition of KEA included in the text of the report is from the RTT-ELC Notices Inviting Applications and is identical across the three ELC Phases. See 2011 RTT-ELC Notice Inviting Applications at 53571. http://www.federalregister.gov/a/2011-21756/p-155

xvii For more information, see the Enhanced Assessment Grant KEA NIA, 78 FR 31359 (May 23, 2013), and ED's Enhanced Assessment Grants program webpage at http://www2.ed.gov/programs/eag/index.html.

xviii Statewide Longitudinal Data System means the State's longitudinal education data system that collects and maintains detailed, high-quality, student- and staff-level data that are linked across entities and that over time provide a complete academic and performance history for each student. The Statewide Longitudinal Data System is typically housed within the State educational agency but includes or can be connected to early childhood, postsecondary, and labor data. This definition is from the RTT-ELC Notices Inviting Applications and is identical

across the three ELC Phases. See 2011 RTT-ELC Notice Inviting Applications at 53570. http://www.federalregister.gov/a/2011-21756/p-180

^{xix} The definition of <u>Essential Data Elements</u> is from the RTT-ELC Notices Inviting Applications and is identical across the three ELC Phases. See 2011 RTT-ELC Notice Inviting Applications at 53571. http://www.federalregister.gov/a/2011-21756/p-130

^{xx} <u>Data System Oversight Requirements</u> means policies for ensuring the quality, privacy, and integrity of data contained in a data system, including--

(a) A data governance policy that identifies the elements that are collected and maintained; provides for training on internal controls to system users; establishes who will have access to the data in the system and how the data may be used; sets appropriate internal controls to restrict access to only authorized users; sets criteria for determining the legitimacy of data requests; establishes processes that verify the accuracy, completeness, and age of the data elements maintained in the system; sets procedures for determining the sensitivity of each inventoried element and the risk of harm if those data were improperly disclosed; and establishes procedures for disclosure review and auditing; and

(b) A transparency policy that informs the public, including families, Early Childhood Educators, and programs, of the existence of data systems that house personally identifiable information, explains what data elements are included in such a system, enables parental consent to disclose personally identifiable information as appropriate, and describes allowable and potential uses of the data.

This definition is from the RTT-ELC Notices Inviting Applications and is identical across the three ELC Phases. See 2011 RTT-ELC Notice Inviting Applications at 53568. http://www.federalregister.gov/a/2011-21756/p-118

^{xxi} The American Academy of Pediatrics promotes a medical home model for delivering primary care that is accessible, continuous, comprehensive, family-centered, coordinated, compassionate, and culturally effective to all children and youth, including children and youth with special health care needs. http://medicalhomeinfo.org/